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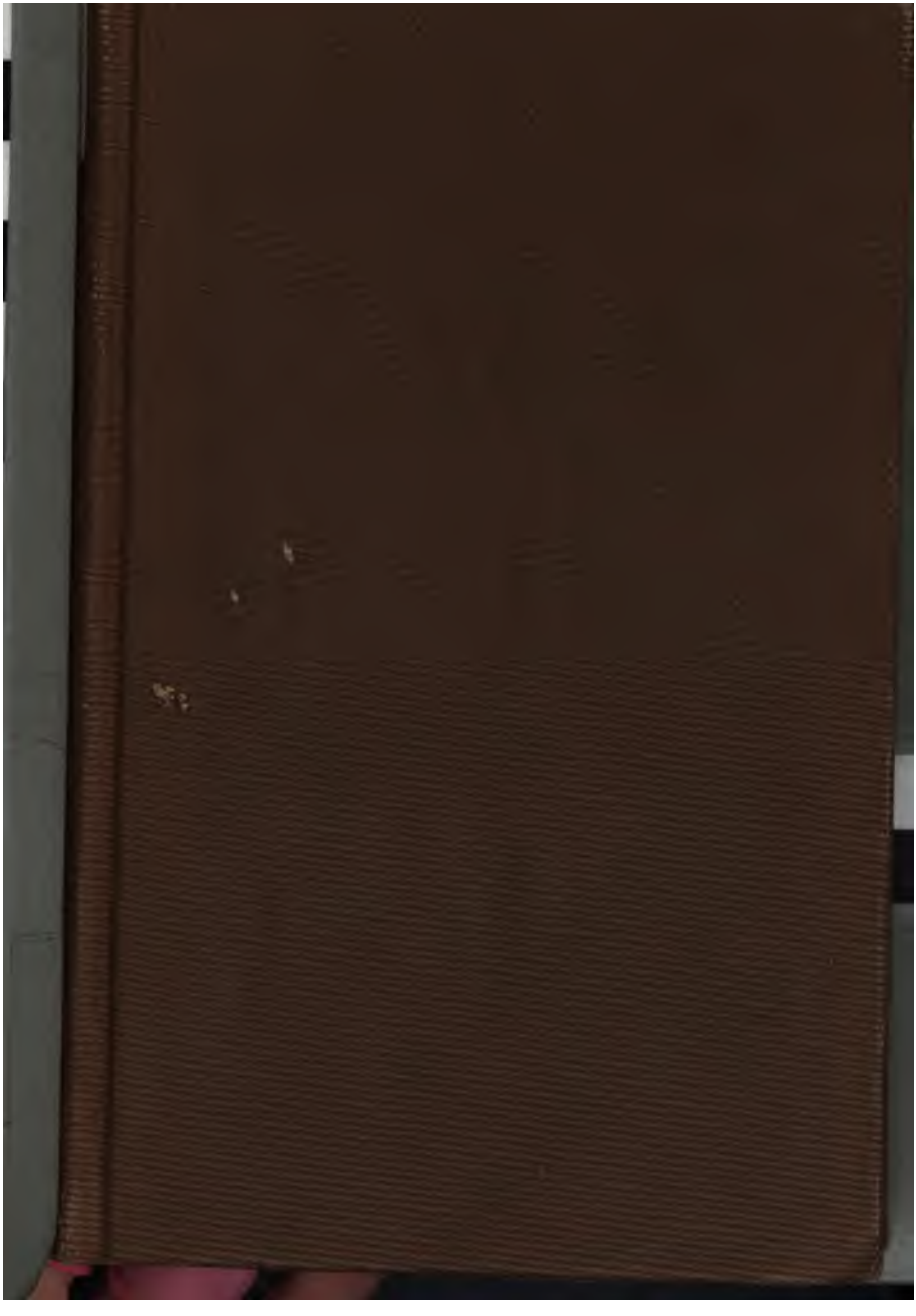

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AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIONS

OF THE

CONVINCEMENT

AND OTHER

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

OF

SAMUEL CRISP,
ELIZABETH WEBB,
EVAN BEVAN,
MARGARET LUCAS,
AND
FREDERICK SMITH.

"THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, CONVERTING THE SOUL: THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD IS PURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE."—PSALM xix. 7.

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The subjects of the following NARRATIONS furnish a few of the numerous instances, in which sincere, seeking individuals, not previously connected with the religious Society of Friends, have been brought to see, with indubitable clearness, that the principles of that Society embrace the Truth as it is in Jesus.

Under this conviction, and for the sake of obtaining a feeding-place with this portion of the flock of Christ, it has been the lot of many such persons to "endure a great fight of afflictions:"—they have been constrained to press forward through strong, and often protracted opposition;—they have been content to make costly sacrifices:—and as they have continued faithful to the measure of light and grace received, have been given largely to experience "joy and peace in believing."

These considerations ought surely to induce those who hold the privilege of membership in this Society by birth, highly to estimate it; also

to seek, through faithfulness, to retain, with the *profession*, the *life* and *virtue* of the Truth. And how incumbent is it on *all* who have been made partakers of this heavenly treasure, to be found in the exercise of that watchful care which is implied in the admonition of the apostle:—"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."—2 *John* 8.

THOMAS CHALK.

Kingston on Thames,
Fifth Month, 1848.

CONTENTS.

LETTERS, &c., OF SAMUEL CRISP.

PAGE.

Memoir of Samuel Crisp 3
Letter I. 11
Letter II. 21
Letter III. 29
A Plea for the Truth, and an earnest Exhortation to be found walking therein 31
On Divine Worship, Gospel Ministry and the true Church 36
A Warning given to the present generation to consider their ways; wherein they are reminded of the late dreadful Tempest of Wind 40

LETTER FROM ELIZABETH WEBB,

To Anthony William Bœhm 51
His Answer thereto 80

MEMOIR OF EVAN BEVAN,

With his Letter to a Friend on his Convincement 85

ACCOUNT OF THE CONVINCEMENT AND CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF MARGARET LUCAS 101

MEMOIRS OF FREDERICK SMITH 175
His Letter to the Children and Youth of the Society of Friends 251
His Letter to Parents and others who have the care of Youth in the Society of Friends 260

LETTERS

AND

EXTRACTS FROM A TREATISE

WRITTEN BY

SAMUEL CRISP;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A SHORT MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

PROVE ALL THINGS ; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—1 THESS. v. 21.

MEMOIR OF SAMUEL CRISP.

SAMUEL CRISP, previous to his joining the Society of Friends, resided in Norfolk. He was educated at college, and took the order of deacon in the church of England (so called); after which he officiated as a parish curate, also for a very short time, as chaplain in a private family.

In the year 1700, being then resident in London, and about thirty years of age, he was convinced of the truth, as professed by Friends, in the manner described in his first Letter. Soon afterwards he was engaged as an assistant to Richard Scoryer, a Friend who kept a large boarding-school at Wandsworth. In this situation he did not remain long, and subsequently opened a school on his own account, at Stepney, near London.

His adoption of the views and principles of Friends, drew on him, not only remonstrances, but also contumely and slander. On his first showing an inclination to unite with them, an acquaintance of his, a priest of the church of England, who was anxious to prevent his so doing, proposed to introduce him to a person, who, he said, was so well acquainted with their writings, that he did not doubt of his receiving satisfaction. Samuel Crisp, desirous of being rightly informed, and of exercising due consideration before

taking so important a step, accepted the offer. He was accordingly taken to the proposed instructor, who proved to be no other than Charles Lesly, the writer of that notorious work called *The Snake in the Grass.** It seems this person succeeded in putting him to a stand for a very short time; but he soon discovered the fallacy of his arguments and insinuations, and forthwith joined in communion with the people to whom he had felt attracted—and this, as he feelingly acknowledged, from "a sincere love of the Truth, and pure regard to his own soul." Soon after this interview, two Letters were addressed to him by Lesly, to the first of which he sent a Reply, accompanied with a copy of a Paper written by Richard Scoryer, proving the falsehood of an assertion contained in *The Snake*, that the Bible was never read in his school. This correspondence, (with a Preface, to which the title belongs rather than to the Letters,) was published in the following year (1701), under the title of *The present State of Quakerism in England. Upon occasion of the Relapse of Samuel Crisp to Quakerism.*

These Letters to Samuel Crisp are, as might be expected, of much the same character with the writer's former scurrilous work, both as regards the manner in which the doctrines of Friends are vilified, and S. C.'s conduct relative to his convincement, is maligned.

Some time afterwards, Samuel Crisp published a refutation in detail, of the charges preferred against

* This book, which came out in the year 1696, was published anonymously: the author, who was a "non-juring parson," was employed by some of the clergy, in this way to render Friends and their principles odious to the world. His misrepresentations were disproved, and his crafty imposture manifested, by Joseph Wyeth and George Whitehead, in a book, entitled, *A Switch for the Snake.*

him by this opponent, as fickleness, enthusiasm, &c., with an able defence of some of the principles of Friends, in a Treatise of three-and-a-half sheets, 12mo, entitled *A Libeller exposed; being a Vindication of the people called Quakers, against the malicious attempts and foul aspersions of a book entitled, "The Present State of Quakerism in England."*

This little work, however the circumstance which called it forth is to be repudiated, furnishes interesting information, and a clear exposition of some important points of doctrine; various extracts from it, are therefore given in the present compilation. From this source we obtain the following particulars and remarks, relative to Samuel Crisp's withdrawing from the communion of the established church, and the stations he occupied therein. "As to my leaving the church of England, God is my witness I did it in pure obedience to the convictions of my own mind; and the peace which I have often felt returned into my bosom, is more than I can express: I have had a great and abundant reward from the Lord for what I have done in this matter.

"I desire to fear God, and am heartily sorry that I have spent so much time in the vanities and impertinencies of this sinful world; taking things upon trust, swayed by temporal interests, and following the prejudices of my education. It is true I was in the order only of deacon, and I bless God that I went no farther in such orders. Then I pretended to preach, and could make shift to patch together an hour's discourse, with something that I got from others, and something that I had read from the Bible, filling up the vacancy with the dark conceivings of my own brain—and this was my gospel. I could talk much of Christ, and heaven and hell, and extolled the

Scriptures highly, which were nevertheless a sealed book to me; for though I read them often, both in public and private, yet my mind being outward, and not waiting in silence upon that Holy Spirit that gave them forth, I knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God: so then the power of death and darkness ruled in me. I had cure of souls, (as they call it,) but was a physician of no value. I knew, indeed, that I had served my time at the university, as apprentices do to a trade; and that I had passed the examination and the ceremony of ordination—and I thought this would do; but as for any immediate call or appointment of God, to the work of the ministry, I knew nothing of it. I had the care of two parishes committed to me, by the bishop of the diocese, but had never any call from God to go and preach to that people. So I was like those prophets Jeremiah speaks of, chap. xxiii. 21, who ran before they were sent, and therefore they could not profit the people at all. I was a superstitious bigot—a poor dark creature—a hireling—a blind leader of the blind. I expected thirty pounds a year for preaching—that was my wages; and if any should question my commission, I knew I had a little piece of paper to shew, which I called my orders, if that would satisfy them; so brutish was I in my understanding. And yet God did not leave himself without a witness; for in the midst of all this darkness and ignorance, I can truly say, there was a measure of sincerity in me; and good desires, and earnest cries and breathings were oftentimes raised in me, that I might once know the Lord and serve him, and see his glory, and witness peace and joy, and health and rest, and salvation to my soul, before I went off the stage of this world; that so I might live with him in that world

which never shall have an end, when time here shall be no more. And God was not unmindful of the travail of his own seed in that day; for blessed be his name, he heard the groanings of it under a great deal of rubbish, and he revealed his Son in me, at the brightness of whose appearance the clouds are scattered and shadows flee away. May the sense of his goodness and tender mercy never depart from me, so long as I have an hour to live, or a minute to breathe in this world. Even to the same God that had compassion on Israel of old, when they sojourned in a strange land, where the Egyptians and Pharaoh oppressed them with much cruel and hard bondage—to that God I ascribe my deliverance, who alone is worthy to be praised, magnified and adored by all who make mention of his name. He remembered us when we were in trouble, and anguish, and deep affliction; being scattered upon the dark and barren mountains, as sheep without a shepherd; wandering from mountain to hill, from one form and empty profession of religion to another; even there did he find us, and his eye pitied us, and he said to the dry bones, Live; for his mercy endureth for ever."

His office as chaplain, (in which it seems he continued but ten days), proved particularly irksome and unsatisfactory; and it is probable that the circumstances connected with it, strengthened, in no small degree, his desire to be disengaged from the forms and ceremonies in which he had been educated. On alluding to his situation in that capacity, he states, that he has had to wait three or four hours at a time, to know when the family would go to prayers; and that his task was not finished when the prayers were ended, as he was expected to wait, to be ready when called for, in an adjoining room, where servants

and others were often passing, and company coming in; and that he was sometimes thus kept in waiting, from morning till night. As he had occasion for some employment by which to procure a livelihood, such inconveniencies as these would probably have been borne till an appointment less wearisome presented, could he have continued here, and at the same time have enjoyed peace of mind: but, "I left my chaplain's place," he writes, "purely upon a foot of conscience; the *lustre of mammon** could not keep me there; and this was some months before I came amongst the people called Quakers, or had the least thoughts that way. I lived some time privately in London, inquiring after the best things. There was then a great noise about the Quakers, and George Keith (who was just then ordained deacon) was the talk of the town. So meeting one day with Robert Barclay's works, in a bookseller's shop, and understanding that

* S. C. in his Reply to Lesly's first Letter, had stated, that his "way being cleared up and the Truth shining out again in great *lustre*, he found a necessity to return into the strait and narrow path, where he hoped to continue," &c. His opponent tauntingly alludes to this expression by saying, "At last we heard you were established as usher to the grand Quaker-school at Wandsworth, and you told us your *lustre* was come! I will not be so uncharitable as to suppose it was the *lustre of mammon*, for the sake of sucha provision; you being destitute before."

It is pleasant to turn from such a prejudiced, ill-conditioned judge, to one whose testimony savours of truth and love. Samuel Bownas, in an account of a journey which he took in the early part of the year 1702, from London to the west of England, on religious service, says, he "had in company a young man that had been bred at college, his name was Samuel Crisp—a pretty, meek-spirited youth, and rightly convinced:" and a short time afterwards, when engaged in like manner in Hertfordshire, he speaks of him as "a sweet companion, having received the knowledge of the truth the right way."—*See Life of Samuel Bownas.*

he was a Quaker, and an eminent writer amongst them, I had a great desire to read him; which I did in the fear of God, and with an humble mind; and thereby was so fully convinced of the truth of the Quakers' principles, (notwithstanding the clamour of the world against them), that from that day to this, I have never once communicated in the church of England. And though I was then destitute of any outward business, yet I did not doubt but the Lord would some way provide me a competent subsistence in this world, which was all I desired—and this accordingly came to pass; for within a few weeks I was recommended to Wandsworth school, Richard Scoryer being then in want of an usher. But, just upon my convincement, two things offered to draw me back again into the world: one was, to read prayers in an apothecary's house in Huntingdon—and the other, to be chaplain to one called the Lady Molesworth, as I remember. Here was some prospect of preferment, and that before I heard of Wandsworth school, or knew any thing of it. So that if I had been so greedy of *mammon* as our author's charity would seem to represent me, I might have smothered my convictions and turned back into Egypt again. But blessed be God, who preserved me in that day, and kept me low before him! I trusted to his kind providence, who knew the sincerity of my heart; and I chose rather to be poor and destitute with a good conscience, than to have all the riches and honours of the world without it. I had found the pearl of great price, and I knew I must sell all to purchase it. Truth was my greatest treasure; that was my chiefest joy: 'For,' as the apostle says, 'our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly

wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' "

This brief Memoir of Samuel Crisp, considered in connexion with the sincerity, humility, and genuine piety which his Letters, &c., exhibit, shews that he had begun to build on the one sure Foundation, and that he bade fair to become a truly serviceable member in the church. But any hopes of this kind that had been cherished by his contemporary friends, were only realized to a very limited extent; inasmuch as it pleased the All-wise Disposer of events to cut short the thread of his life. He died of the small-pox, at Stepney aforesaid, on the 7th of the Fourth Month, 1704, aged 34 years.

LETTERS OF SAMUEL CRISP.

[The three following Letters of Samuel Crisp were written about the year 1702; the first and second on the occasion of his withdrawing from the church of England (so called) to join the Society of Friends. These have passed through several editions together, as a pamphlet. The third Letter, a copy of which has been kindly transmitted by a Friend, to the Editor of the present volume, and which, it will be seen, contains the expression of his religious feelings to a fellow-professor of the Truth, is now printed for the first time: this, although very short, is not without its value, showing, as it does, the writer's conviction, that his having so far yielded to apprehended duty, as to unite in religious fellowship with Friends, furnished no ground for relaxing in watchfulness, and diligence in the christian warfare.]

Letter I.

I received a letter from thee, the week before last, which was sent by thy uncle Bolton: there were a great many kind expressions in it, and in thy sister Clopton's likewise. I acknowledge myself much obliged to you both, and to the whole family, for many repeated kindnesses; and if my school had not engrossed so much of my time, I would have taken opportunity to answer my dear friend's letter now, and upon that account my delay will be the more excusable.

The news thou hast heard of my late change is really true—I cannot conceal it, for it is what I glory in—neither was it any prospect of temporal advantage that induced me to it, but a sincere love to the truth, and pure regard to my own soul. Neither can I be sufficiently thankful to God, that he hath let me live to this glorious day, and not cut me off in the midst of my sins and provocations against him. He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He hath brought me off from the forms and shadows of religion, and let me see, in a more illustrious manner, what is the life and substance of it, as he found me in some degree faithful to that measure of light and knowledge he had bestowed on me, whilst I was in the communion of the church of England: therefore he was pleased of late, as I humbly waited upon him, to make known to me greater and deeper mysteries of his kingdom. And I can truly say, that I find by daily experience, as I keep low and retired unto that pure gift which he hath planted within me, things are more and more cleared up to me, and the truth shines and prevails greatly over the kingdom of darkness; and if I should now turn my back upon such manifestations as these, and entangle myself again with the yoke of bondage, surely I should grieve the Holy Spirit, so that he might justly withdraw his kind operations, and never return more to assist and comfort me. For God is not mocked: religion is a very serious and weighty thing: repentance and salvation are not to be trifled with; nor is turning to God to be put off till our own time, leisure, or convenience: but we must love and cherish the least appearance of Christ, not slighting or despising the day of small things, but embrace the first opportunity of

following Christ in any of his commands. When he speaks, it is with such force and authority, that we cannot stand to cavil, dispute, or ask questions: for unless we will be so obstinate as to shut our eyes against the sun, we must needs confess to the truth of his doctrine, and presently strike in with it. And, therefore, when for several weeks I had lived more privately and retiredly in London, than was usual, fasting twice or thrice in a week, and sometimes more, spending my time in reading the Scriptures and in prayer to God, this was a good preparation of my mind to receive the truth which he was then about to make known to me. I lamented the errors of my past life, and was desirous to attain a more excellent degree of holiness than I had discovered in the church of England. In this religious retirement God knew the breathings of my soul, how sincere I was, and resigned to him when alone. I wanted him to set me free, and to speak peace and comfort to my soul, which was grieved and wearied with the burden of my sin: for though I had strictly conformed myself to the orders and ceremonies of the church of England, and had kept myself from running into any great or scandalous enormities, (the fear of the Almighty preserving me), yet still I had not that rest and satisfaction in myself which I desired, and greatly longed for. I found when I had examined my state and condition God-ward, that things were not right with me.

As for a sober and plausible conversation in the eye of the world, I knew that was a very easy attainment: a good natural temper, with the advantage of a liberal education, will quickly furnish a man with abilities for that; so that he shall be looked upon as a saint, and very spiritual, when perhaps in chains of

darkness, in the gall of bitterness, and in the very bond of iniquity. If this sort of righteousness would have done, perhaps I might make as fair pretensions that way as some others; but, alas! I quickly saw the emptiness and unsatisfactoriness of those things: this is a covering that will not protect or hide us from the wrath of the Almighty, when he comes to judgment. It is not a man's natural temper, nor his education, that makes him a good christian: this is not the righteousness the gospel calls for, nor is this the "truth in the inward parts" which God requires. The heart and affections must be cleansed and purified before we can be acceptable to God; therefore it was death to me to think of taking up my rest in a formal pretence of holiness, wherein yet I saw to my grief, abundance of people wrapped themselves, and slept securely and quietly, dreaming of the felicity of paradise, as if heaven were now their own, and they needed not trouble themselves any more about religion. I could not entertain so dangerous an opinion as this; for then I should be tempted to take up my rest by the way, whilst I was travelling towards the promised land.

I think I made a little progress in a holy life, and through God's assistance I weakened some of my spiritual enemies, whilst I lived in the communion of the national church. I thank my God, I can truly say, whilst I used those prayers, I did it with zeal and sincerity, in his fear and dread: but still I ceased not my earnest supplication to him in private, that he would show me something more excellent; that I might get a complete victory over all my lusts and passions, and might perfect righteousness before him. For I found a great many sins and weaknesses daily attending me; and though I made frequent resolu-

tions to forsake those sins, yet still the temptation was too strong for me; so that I had often cause to complain with the apostle, in the bitterness of my soul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Who shall set me free, and give me strength to triumph over sin, the world, and the devil; that I may in every thing please God, and there may not be the least thought, word or motion, gesture or action, but what is exactly agreeable to his most holy will, as if I saw him standing before me, and as if I were to be judged by him for the thought of my heart next moment? O divine life! O seraphic soul! O that I could always stand here! for here is no reflection, no sorrow, no repentance; but at God's right hand there is perfect peace and a river of unspeakable joy. O that we might imitate the life of Jesus, and be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work! This was the frequent breathing of my soul to God when I was in the country, but more especially after I had left my new preferment of a chaplain, and took private lodgings in London. In this retirement I hope I may say without boasting, I was very devout and religious, and found great comfort and refreshment in it from the Lord, who let me see the beauty of holiness: the sweetness that arises from an humbled, mortified life, was then very pleasant to my taste, and I rejoiced in it more than in all the delights and pleasures of the world.

And now it pleased God to show me, that if I would indeed live strictly and holily as becomes the gospel, then I must leave the communion of the church of England; but I knew not yet which way to determine myself, nor to what body of men I should join, who were more orthodox and more regular in

their lives. As for the Quakers (so called), I was so great a stranger to them, that I had never read any of their books, nor do I remember that ever I conversed with any one man of that communion in my whole life. I think there was one in Foxly, whilst I was curate there; but I never saw the man, though I went several times to his house on purpose to talk with him, and to bring him off from his mad and wild enthusiasm, as I then ignorantly thought it to be. As for that way, I knew it was everywhere spoken against: he that had a mind to appear more witty and ingenious than the rest, would choose this for the subject of his profane jests and drollery; with this he makes sport, and diverts the company, for a Quaker is but another name for a fool or a madman, and was scarcely ever mentioned but with scorn and contempt. As for drollery, I confess I was never any great friend to it; but indeed, if all was true that was laid to the Quakers' charge, I thought they were some of the worst people that ever appeared in the world, and wondered with what face they could call themselves christians, since I was told they denied the fundamental articles of the holy faith, for which I ever bore the highest veneration and esteem. And, notwithstanding, I had always lived at the greatest distance from that people, and was very zealous in the worship of the church of England, and upon all occasions would speak very honourably of it, moreover was content to suffer some few inconveniences upon that account, (as thou very well knowest), yet my father still looked upon me as inclining to the Quakers; and some years ago signified to a friend, he was afraid I would become an enthusiast: and whilst at Bungan school, he sent me two books to read that were written against the Quakers, one of which was

John Faldo's, who hath been sufficiently exposed for it by William Penn.

Whilst I lived in London, in that private, retired manner I was just now speaking of, walking very humbly in the sight of God, and having opportunity to reflect upon my past life, as I had occasion to be one day at a bookseller's shop, I happened to cast my eye on Barclay's works; and having heard in the country, that he was a man of great account amongst the Quakers, I had a mind to see what their principles were, and what defence they could make for themselves; for sure, thought I, these people are not so silly and ridiculous, nor maintainers of such horrid opinions, as the author of *The Snake* and some others would make us believe. I took *Barclay* home with me, and I read him through in a week's time, save a little treatise at the end, which finding to be very philosophical, I omitted; but, however, I soon read enough to convince me of my own blindness and ignorance in the things of God. There I found a light to break in upon my mind, which did mightily refresh and comfort me in that poor, low, and humbled state in which I then was; for indeed I was then, and had been for a considerable time before, very hungry and thirsty after righteousness; and therefore I received the truth with all readiness of mind. It was like balm to my soul, and as showers of rain to the thirsty earth, which is parched with heat and drought. This author laid things down so plainly, and proved them with such ingenuity and dexterity of learning, and opened the Scriptures so clearly to me, that without standing to cavil, dispute, raise argument or objection, or consulting with flesh and blood, I presently resigned myself to God; and weeping for joy that I had found so great a treasure, I

often thanked him with tears in my eyes for so kind a visitation of his love, that he was graciously pleased to look towards me when my soul cried after him. So, though before I was in great doubt and trouble of mind, not knowing which way to determine myself, yet now the sun breaking out so powerfully upon me, the clouds were scattered. I was now fully satisfied in my own mind which way I ought to go, and to what body of people I should join myself.

So I immediately left the communion of the church of England, and went to Gracechurch Street Meeting. After I had read *Barclay*, I read some other books of that kind, among which was an excellent piece, though in a small volume, called *No Cross, No Crown*. Thus I continued reading and frequenting meetings for several weeks together, but did not let any one soul know what I was about. The first man I conversed with was George Whitehead; and this was several weeks after I began to read *Barclay*, and frequent [Friends'] meetings. By him I was introduced into more acquaintance; and still the farther I went, the more I liked their plainness, and the decency and simplicity of their conversation. They do not use the ceremonies and salutations of the church of England, but shake hands freely, and converse together as brothers and sisters, that are sprung of the same royal seed, and made kings and priests unto God. O the love, the sweetness and tenderness of affection I have seen among this people! "By this," says Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Put on therefore," says the apostle, "(as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering."

Thus, my dear friend, I have given thee an account

of my proceeding on this affair. As to my bodily state, if thou desirest to know what it is, I may acquaint thee that I have my health as well as ever, and I bless God I have food and raiment sufficient for me, so that I want no outward thing; and I have the necessities and conveniencies of life liberally: let us not burden ourselves with taking care for the vanities and superfluities of it. Let us possess our vessels in sanctification and honour: and as we bring our minds into perfect subjection to the whole will of God, so let us bring our bodies to the most simple and natural way of living; being content with the fewest things; never studying to gratify our wanton appetites, nor to follow the customs and humours of men, but how we may so contract our earthly cares and pleasures, that we may bring most glory to God, most health and peace to our own souls, and do most service to the truth. And if this be our aim, certainly a very small portion of the things of this world will suffice us. Seeing we are christians, we should therefore earnestly pursue those things which bring us nearest to God, and which are most perfective of human nature. For what is more than a competency, seems to be a burden to a generous, philosophical soul, which would breathe in a pure vehicle, that so it may have a quick sense and relish of all blessings, both of the superior and inferior worlds.

Thou knowest, my dear friend, that religion is a very serious thing; repentance is a great work, and one precious immortal soul is of more worth than ten thousand perishing worlds, with all their pomp and glory; therefore let us take courage, and be valiant for the truth upon the earth—let us not content ourselves with a name and profession of godliness—let us come to the life and power of it—let us not

despond of getting the victory. We have a little strength for God: let us be faithful to him and he will give us more strength, so that we shall see the enemy of our peace fall before us, and nothing shall be impossible unto us. I say, my friend, let us be faithful to that measure of light and knowledge which God has given us, to be profited and edified by it in a spiritual life; and as God sees we are diligent and faithful to work with the strength we have, he will more and more enlighten us, so that we shall see to the end of those forms and shadows of religion wherein we had formerly lived. But if he sees we are about to take up our rest in those shadows, that we grow cold and indifferent in the pursuit of holiness, running out into notions and speculations, and have more mind to dispute, and to make a shew of learning and subtlety, than to lead a holy and devout life, then it is just with God to leave us in a carnal and polluted state; to continue yet but in the outward court, where we may please ourselves with beholding the beauty and ornaments of a worldly sanctuary, and never witness the veil being taken away, and that we are brought by the blood of Jesus into the holiest of all, where alone there is true peace with God, and rest to the weary soul. I could say much upon this head, if time or leisure would give leave.

As for a particular answer to thy letter, I have not time now to give it; and for the present let this general answer suffice: and if thou wilt consider things in their pure abstracted nature, and not suffer the prejudice of education to sway thee, but in fear and humility wilt search out the truth for thyself, thou wilt find that there needs no other answer to thy letter than what I have already given. For by waiting upon God, and diligently seeking him, thou

wilt find an answer to it in thy own bosom; and this will be much more full, clear, and satisfactory than I, or any other man living can pretend to give thee, or any other friend who hath lovingly written to me; for whom I desire, with all the sincere-hearted in the church of England, that they may come to witness the almighty power of God, to save and redeem them from every yoke: and that they may clearly see to the end of those things which are abolished, and come to the enjoyment of spiritual and heavenly things themselves, is the daily prayer and deep travail of my soul, God knoweth. Till I can be more particular, if thou please thou mayst communicate this to them, and let them know that I am well, and thank them for their kind letters. Let us remember to pray for one another with all fervency, that we may stand perfect in the whole will of God. Amen, saith my soul. I am thy most affectionate friend and servant in Jesus,

SAMUEL CRISP.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I lately received a kind and brotherly letter from thee, for which I return thee many thanks. I am now in the communion of the people called Quakers; and I have cause to bless God for this happy change of my life. I am, through mercy, brought off from the shadow of religion, and am pressing forward to get acquaintance with the quickening power, life, and virtue of it, that I may be a christian indeed, and not in the name and profession only. I had a great while talked and discoursed of holiness, but did not understand what it was to walk with God, to live and dwell

in him. Perhaps, indeed, some may think I made a fair show of piety when I was with you; but, alas! I was deeply sensible of my own faults and miscarriages; and I resolved, through God's assistance, to inquire after something more noble and excellent than I had discovered in that state: and blessed be his name for ever, that God hath answered the cry of my soul, and let me see a people, that are hated and despised by the world, but are dear to him; for he hath revealed to them the mysteries of the kingdom; he hath carried them upon eagles' wings, and cherished them as the apple of his eye. As for me, I have been yet but in the outward court, and far short of that truth and righteousness that is taught and practised among this people; for they are come within the holiest of all—they are come into a near communion with God—to behold the cherubims of glory that cover the mercy seat—to be fed with the true manna. These are mysteries that are revealed unto the meek and lowly; but the haughty, insolent, and profane cannot come near them, nor taste of the sweetness nor comfort of them. Indeed the formal, traditional sort of people of the world may talk of these things, as they have heard them from others, and in their sober moments may have some faint glimmerings that way; but to be come to the real and inward enjoyment of them, they can no more pretend, than to work the greatest impossibilities: all their wit, and subtlety, and learning, cannot reach higher to handle of the word of life; this is peculiar only to those who are content to forsake all, and become fools for Christ. They are those who are in a good temper to receive and co-operate with the influences of the Holy Spirit, and have seen the emptiness and vanity of all those things that are so much admired by the world. The

schools, and universities, and learned doctors, and great rabbies, have not profited me; they are ravened from the Spirit of God, and gone out into their own notions and speculations, thinking thereby to search out God, and comprehend the truth. Alas! the mysteries of the kingdom are far out of their reach in their carnal minds; they weary themselves in vain; the vulture's eye cannot pierce into these secrets; all the great critics, scholars, and philosophers of the world, are fools in these things. They are wearying themselves to find the deep things of our God, studying and racking their heads, tossing and tumbling to and fro like a wild bull in a net, that knows not which way to disentangle himself: the more he struggles, the weaker he grows and the faster he is bound; so the more these vain talkers read, the more they write, the more they cavil and dispute, the farther they are from God, and the more they declare their hatred and enmity to the spirit of Christ, and to the simplicity of the gospel. I have been a long time weary of the folly and impertinency of these men, and chiefly the celebrated fathers of the church, as they call them: the councils and synods of old are now of very small account with me. I am not ashamed to sit under the teachings of women and mechanics, howsoever they may seem in the eye of the world; for they teach me more christianity, and instruct me more perfectly in a divine life, than all the studied, elaborate sermons and discourses that ever I heard at the universities or since: their words are with power—they are mightily assisted with the spirit of God—they speak with majesty and authority —and there is a native beauty, clearness, and solidity of expression, that shines through their discourses, which is sufficient to answer that groundless calumny,

viz., the Quakers' preaching is nonsense, and nobody can understand them. This I have heard often refuted by many living testimonies; so that I do rather think them the best wits, and the most ingenious people in the world; for they employ their parts and learning in the fear of God, to his glory and service, and to promote the true interest of mankind. As for the little jests, wittiness, and vain pedantry of the age, which I know the world hath esteem for, (and nothing will please but what abounds with such fooleries); I say, if the Quakers be deficient in any of these, it is not for want of abilities, or because they have less wit than other men, but because they have more prudence and wisdom to govern it; and that is the reason why they avoid such childish vanities, which are so freely used and indulged in by others, to the great dishonour of God, and the christian religion. Therefore because they do not seek to please a wanton age, and make people laugh and be merry, nor to entertain that carnal, airy mind with pleasant stories, fine notions, and witty expressions of natural things; from thence it is that they have been shamefully traduced by the world, as the most ignorant, blind, and foolish people that ever made any profession of religion: and yet this is the people to whom I have now joined myself in a sincere love to truth, God knoweth. I glory more in this fellowship and acquaintance with these lambs of Christ, than if I were related to the greatest kings, lords, and potentates upon the earth. Oftentimes hath my spirit been refreshed with theirs, when we have met together to wait upon God; and my soul still longs and pants more and more to be filled with these divine comforts. He is ready always to pour down blessings upon us, if we would qualify ourselves for the reception of them; if

we would put away vain thoughts, which cloud and darken the mind, and so hinder the favourable influences and irradiations of heaven. And since it has pleased God to visit me of late, and to make known to me excellent things in righteousness, he alone is to have the praise and glory of all; and now I freely resign myself to the conduct of the blessed Spirit.

Now let the truth prosper; now let it run and be glorified in the earth; let it shine out in its full lustre, to the terror and confusion of all the enemies thereof, and to the reviving of the souls of the hungry and thirsty, who are ready to faint, waiting for and expecting the consolation of Israel, until the time of refreshment comes from the presence of the Lord; who will open a fountain for Judah and Jerusalem, so that rivers shall run in dry places: there will he speak peace to his people. And after they have sat silent a little while in the dust, suffering patiently the chastising rod of his love to pass over them, he shall then comfort the daughter of Sion, and say, "Arise, thou afflicted, and weep and mourn no more, but put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem! raise thy head, uncover thy face, and gird up thy loins with strength; see the day break, and the morning spread itself upon the mountains; now the sorrowful nights of affliction are gone over, the clouds are scattered and gone, the sun is risen in its brightness, and now joy and peace shall be multiplied; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." O! let us wait, in humility of soul and tenderness of heart, before the Lord, that we may witness this great change and salvation wrought in us and for us; that the Scripture may be no more a sealed book to

us, but that we may feel the precious truth therein recorded, to be fulfilled in our own particulars. Then we shall never be weary of praying, and reading the Holy Scriptures; we shall never be loth or unwilling to come into God's presence: for his love, and the sweetness of his ointment, will draw and allure us to dwell always under his canopy, that we may feel life and power to flow from him, who is the ocean that supplies all the wants of the children of men. And how shall we come to taste that heavenly banquet which he hath prepared for us, that we may eat and drink at his table, and that our souls may delight in fatness—I say, how shall we attain to this, but by a strict and mortified life? Certainly the more we retire from worldly joys, and empty ourselves of earthly comforts and false delights, the fitter we shall be to receive those that are spiritual and heavenly; and not only to receive and rejoice in them for a time, but to live and dwell in them for ever. For this is the life of Jesus; and here the kingdom of God reigns in the heart and soul, by which it is changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And now I would ask all the wise and prudent, all the rich, all the noble and learned men of the world, what they think of these things? Whether this is to be learned in their courts and palaces? Or whether any of the great scholars and universities in Christendom can furnish us with such a system of divinity as this? No; they hate it and despise it; and instead of a sober answer to my query, they return scoffs and contempt. "This is canting," they say,—"an idle dream, and forged chimera of his own brain;" and a great many more opprobious names they have for such inquiries as these. Sometimes perhaps they will

soften the expression with an hypocritical show, will pretend to pity me, calling it an unhappy effect of melancholy, and too much retirement from the world; and this they think too much condescension—that I ought to think myself beholden to them for giving it so mild a character; for at other times they deal more sharply, and say confidently that it is madness, delusion, witchcraft, and diabolical enthusiasm. But I am content to lie under all these odious imputations from the world, knowing very well, that better men than I, have suffered the same things before me, and do at this present time. As for my enemies, I can truly say, I thank God I pity them and pray for them: they do not hurt me, but themselves.

And now my dear friend, before I conclude, suffer me a little to speak of thy present circumstances; for as God knoweth, my bowels yearn towards thee in the tender love of Jesus. I suppose thou art now where I left thee, viz. with the lord Richardson, (so called), in the capacity of a chaplain; an office which I have had a little experience of myself, since I last saw thee; but was quickly so weary of that servile yoke, so unworthy of that holy function I bore, that in ten days' time I quitted my new preferment, and left it more free than ever I undertook it. What peace or satisfaction thou canst have in such kind of employment, I know not; for my part I could find none; my soul was grieved and burthened every day with seeing and hearing their evil deeds, beholding their vanities and excesses; this was a sword to my soul and spirit, it wounded me very deep: and I do solemnly profess, I had rather beg my bread from door to door, than to live in the like bondage again, where I must be obliged to such ceremonies and formalities,—to flatter men in their sins,—to cry, "peace, peace;"—and to sew pillows

under the armholes of delicate people, who can never bear the least check or frown ; but expect the mercenary priest should always laugh or smile in their faces, even when he sees plainly they are going to hell and destruction. And yet I must tell thee, the family I was in was looked upon as one of the most sober and regular, as the world goes now ; and I must needs say, I did not leave them for any drinking, gaming, swearing, or whoring that I perceived amongst them ; as to all these filthy, scandalous practices, as far as I could see, they were blameless : but yet I saw their hearts were not right, for they were lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; and thou knowest that he or they, let them be great or small, if they live in pleasures, grow fat, and wanton against Christ, such persons are dead whilst they live. I say, whatever their faith, or principles, or professions may be, yet in religion they are dead. I shall say no more, but hasten to a conclusion. If thou desire a particular account of my convincement, thou mayst see it in a letter I wrote lately to Richard Lake, junior, wherein I gave him a fair and true relation of my proceedings in that matter—what steps I took—and how God did graciously assist me, when he had raised in me sincere desires and inquiries after truth and holiness. Dear friend, I have no more at present, but to let thee know, I do most heartily pray for thee, that thou mayst consider things without prejudice, and not suffer any of the temptations and allurements of the world to draw thy mind from God, and to hinder thee in thy pursuit of holiness. He that loves father or mother, brother or sister, or any of the endearments of this world, more than Christ, is not worthy of him : but if thou wilt come into communion with Christ, and follow the guidance of

his light and spirit, O what a blessed and happy rest shalt thou find to thy soul! O what rivers of living waters will spring up in thee! of which thou mayst drink freely, and praise God for all his mercies and benefits. That thou mayst indeed come to such spiritual enjoyments and refreshments as these, is the sincere desire of

Thy loving and affectionate friend,

SAMUEL CRISP.

LETTER III.

Leeds, Sixth Month 7th, 1702.

LOVING FRIEND, G. PAXTON,*

These may acquaint thee, that last Fourth-day was a week since I got well to my journey's end. But though my body rests as to the outward, yet I still feel a necessity to continue my inward, spiritual travel towards the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Canaan, where my soul may be satiated with everlasting and unchangeable felicity. I must still keep on my watch that the enemy of my soul may not at any time take an advantage against me: I must still stand upon my guard, go on in the Lamb's warfare, and diligently pursue such things as may make my calling and election sure: and this I think is the state of every christian, so long as he sojourns in this world. Perfect and complete rest and peace are only to be expected when we have laid aside these mortal, frail bodies, and shall enter those mansions of glory that Christ our Head hath prepared for us. But if we would reign with him in another world, we must suffer with him in this—if we would wear the Crown,

* A Friend who resided in Durham.

we must first bear the Cross—if we would be conquerors, we must fight—if we would win the prize, we must not be cool and indifferent, but exert all our strength in the christian race—in short, if we would be perfect, we must sell all, part with all our lovers, and [be willing to] sacrifice all the nearest and dearest enjoyments, that we have in this world [when called for]: this is self-denial—this is mortification indeed—and this is the repentance unto life, never to be repented of. My love to thy uncle and Friends.

I am thy loving and affectionate friend,

SAMUEL CRISP.

EXTRACTS

FROM SAMUEL CRISP'S "VINDICATION OF THE PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS."

[The first of the three following pieces is extracted from the Preface to Samuel Crisp's *Vindication*, the next from the Treatise itself, and the remaining one from the Appendix to it.

It is believed that the weighty counsel, sound doctrine, and instructive remarks which these Extracts contain, will commend them to the cordial acceptance of the serious reader.]

A PLEA FOR THE TRUTH, AND AN EARNEST EXHORTATION TO BE FOUND WALKING THEREIN.

"Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."—Jer. vi. 16.

READER,

I desire thou wouldst be serious and unbiassed in the reading of what I here present to thy view—so mayst thou reap benefit and advantage by it to thy soul. The noise and clamour against the Quakers has of late years been carried on and promoted with

great diligence by their adversaries; insomuch few, I think, who converse with the world, can be ignorant of it. This gave me occasion to inquire into their principles; and that I might not take things upon trust, or believe the report of others concerning them, I was willing to see for myself—to read and consult their own authors. To this I applied myself with great seriousness; desiring of the Lord in great humility and bowedness of soul, that he would open my understanding in the great things of his law, and that if the truth was amongst the Quakers, I might, without consulting with flesh and blood, join myself to that people, however slighted and despised I might be by the world for so doing. It was peace with God I wanted; and in comparison of that, I looked upon all other things as dross and dung. I had been always brought up in the national way of worship, and had been strict and punctual in the rites and ceremonies of the church of England beyond many; but yet I found all *that* would not do my business; the seed was oppressed, and death reigned under all those forms and specious appearances of godliness. It was an easy matter to talk, and go the round of my devotions; but I wanted strength and power to overcome my sins and corruptions. There was a cry raised in my soul after righteousness and truth; and this I found all my outward observations could not give me, for the kingdom of God is within men, though I was seeking for it abroad, doating upon shadows. And thus was I diverted from the pursuit of the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. I lived in darkness and ignorance of the true and saving knowledge of God, notwithstanding my high pretensions. But it has pleased God to rend the vail, to disperse the clouds,

and scatter the mists and fogs, in a good measure, blessed be his name.

Know, reader, that there is a people in this age, who have paid something for religion; and they will not be put off with shams and pretences, nor decoyed by the wiles of the enemy: they are not easily to be imposed upon, in the great things that concern their everlasting peace: they cannot bow to images, nor satisfy themselves with the husks and formalities of religion, but labour to come into the life of holiness and the real practice of virtue; whom neither smiles nor frowns can prevail with to forsake the truth: These the devil envies, and to render them odious, he paints them out in black colours. To be sure, in his account, they are fools and madmen—fanatics I'll warrant you—schismatics—heretics—a dangerous sort of people: Sirs, look to yourselves, and as you love your souls, beware of the infection of Quakerism. This is the common language when people do not please him; but if they are tame, and easy to his insinuations, if they can rest in a form, and dwell upon words and notions, then he reigns in peace—his kingdom is quiet—no hard names then.

Well, reader, what I said before, I repeat now—it concerns thee to be serious, and to weigh things with a clear and disinterested mind. If thou wilt serve God, thou must take courage and break loose from the world: if thou wilt come to Christ, thou shalt find true riches, and a fountain of inexpressible joy. If thou die with Christ, thou shalt live; if thou suffer with him in this vain, transitory world, thou shalt reign with him in glory for ever. Look not at thy own weakness, but look unto God, whose grace is sufficient for thee; his strength is magnified in our weakness. Let not then the cross discourage thee,

but take it up, and in meekness and patience bear it after Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. Strip thyself from the creatures; wean thy affections from the world; strengthen thy hand in God; cleave stedfastly unto him; make him thy friend, and then thou needst not care who is thine enemy; all the rage of men and devils can never hurt thee. Hearken unto God; obey his voice; mind the teachings of his Holy Spirit; give up thyself entirely to the conduct of it, for its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. This is that Comforter which is given to lead us into all truth: blessed are all those that are taught and led by it; they see their way—it is made plain, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. Trust not to uncertainties; put not off thy repentance; delay not the time of returning to God. How dost thou know thou shalt live an hour longer? Are all thy accounts fair and clear? Art thou ready to depart, if God should call thee before to-morrow morning?

Reader, once more I say — it concerns thee to be serious; for the day of God hastens, wherein all false coverings shall be rent off; fear shall take hold on the hypocrites, as sorrow upon a woman in travail, and they shall not escape. A name and profession of Christianity without the life and power of it, will then stand in very little stead; it will be a terrible day, who shall be able to stand in it! Certainly none of the hypocrites, and shufflers, and vain talkers, and disputers of this world, and empty notionists, and time-servers, and men-pleasers; no, they will be all swept away, as chaff before the wind. "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all

the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."—Mal. iv. 1. And therefore now is the accepted time, prize it; now is the day of salvation. Know, reader, that by the grace of God, thou art capable of great attainments; true faith will remove mountains; by that thou mayst escape the pollutions of the world, and come clean out of Babylon and Egypt, and all such things as would let or hinder thee in thy christian race. Why then should we trifle away our precious minutes? Why should we die short of true happiness? Let the time past suffice us, to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, serving divers lusts and pleasures, and walking in the vanity of our minds. God has borne long with us; his mercy and loving-kindness has been great; let us provoke him no longer, but instantly return to him and humble our souls before him. This is the labour and travail of my soul, God knoweth, desiring that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. O that all would taste and see how gracious he is! If they would wait upon him in silence, with their minds retired from the world, and staid upon him, they may come to see wonderful things in righteousness; the mysteries of God's kingdom should be opened and revealed to them, yea things which were kept secret from the foundation of the world. Such should find true peace and rest to their souls; they should find strength administered according to their several wants, and grace to help in time of need; yea, they should go from strength to strength and grow in grace daily, as the Apostle said, Eph. iv. 13; "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ :" which, reader, that we may all come to know, witness and experience in ourselves, is the earnest supplication and prayer of thy hearty well-wisher and sincere friend, to serve thee in the Truth.

SAMUEL CRISP.

ON DIVINE WORSHIP, GOSPEL MINISTRY, AND THE TRUE CHURCH.

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."—John iv. 24.

Our christian belief is, that every man ought to wait upon God, in the measure of his own good Spirit; that he is to follow its motions, observe its counsels, and make it the great rule and guide of his life; and we say, as men wait in this and are led and governed by this, so, and not otherwise, are they accepted and approved in the sight of God. For this, and this only, can work all acceptable works in us, and for us. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."—Gal. v. 16. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Rom. viii. 14. In the performance of all religious worship, we say there is especial need that men should wait upon God, in the gift of his own Spirit, to feel the conduct and assistance of it; for this is the salt of the sacrifice, it is this gives savour and life to every duty, it is this must make known our wants to us, and instruct us how to apply ourselves to God for

suitable relief. The apostle of the Gentiles is excellent in this: Rom. viii. 26, 27.—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;—and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and we wait upon him in silence, that we may be enabled to perform this worship and service, believing that his Spirit will help and teach us to pray, better than all directories and common-prayer books. Shall we for this be ridiculed? and because we are tender of the righteous seed of light and life in ourselves and others, observing what the apostle enjoins, not to quench the Spirit nor despise prophesyings, must we therefore be called fanatics and enthusiasts?

It is not men's running over their prayers by heart, or reading them out of a book, or undertaking to pray or preach by the strength of their own reason and natural faculties, that finds acceptance with God. None of these can be said to be that spiritual worship and service which God calls for in the days of the Gospel, now that he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba Father: not now, I say, when he has poured forth his Spirit upon sons and daughters; so that they can and must prophesy; not now, when God has so clearly revealed himself to the world, and told us expressly by his Son, that he is a Spirit; that the true worshippers shall worship him in spirit and in truth; and that he seeketh such to worship him. These are Gospel days; this is the last and most glorious dispensation that shall ever be in the world; now God calls for a more than ordinary strictness and purity of life. The times of ignorance, it is said, God winked at; but now he commandeth all

men every where to repent; to leave off their dead forms, their empty ceremonies and hypocritical will-worship, a worship which they can go about in their own time, begin and finish it when they please. Here many are making a profession of religion and godliness outwardly, going on in a round of bodily exercises, and pretended devotions, from one year's end to another, and yet are destitute of the inward, experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ. But blessed be God for ever, that he has in this generation, made bare his arm in a wonderful manner, and brought a remnant near to himself: they have seen to an end of types and shadows, and are come to Christ, the life and substance, and to the one spiritual baptism, that purgeth the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. And they are come to the true supper, and inward communion of the body and blood of Christ; where they feed daily at his table, and eat of that bread that came down from heaven, which nourisheth the soul unto eternal life. These are brought off from all the world's carnal and literal teachers, and are come to the ministration of the Spirit, and the teachings of Christ Jesus, who is their Prophet, Priest, and King, the only true Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. These are come to a true silence, and ceasing from all their own words; they wait for the arising of that Divine Power and Life which shall render their service accepted of God and useful and beneficial to men. They preach and pray as the Spirit helps them. They observe Christ's rule and precept, which is, to watch and pray; plainly shewing, that before men pray, they should watch; that is, retire in their minds, and wait upon God, that they may "serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For (as the apostle says) our God is a

consuming fire." Those who rush hastily into his presence, without due preparation and watchfulness, they offer the sacrifice of fools; they do not come up with acceptance on God's altar.—Isa. lx. 7. It is said of Nadab and Abihu, that "they offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."—Levit. x. 1, 2. Let the ungodly and uncircumcised priests and people of the world, who on all occasions are so full of their prayers and devotions, consider this: they would, I am confident, be ashamed to appear in that posture before some of their superiors, wherein they many times appear before God. But, as I said before, they who know God rightly, have learned to wait upon him in the silence of all flesh. "Without me," (says Christ,) "ye can do nothing." Being sensible of this, they have learned to bow and humble themselves before God; not daring to open their mouths, or speak a word, but as God is pleased to make known to them the mysteries of his kingdom, to prepare a sacrifice for himself, and to touch their lips with a live coal from the altar. When the well springs up, then they can sing unto it.—Numb. xxi. 17. When God opens, none can shut; and when he shuts none can open. These wait, as the apostles at Jerusalem, to receive power from on high; when God bids them speak, they must speak; they may neither add to [that which is given them,] nor diminish from it. They must not quench the Spirit, nor despise prophesyings.—1 Thess. v. 19, 20.

This is our christian belief, with respect to the worship of God, and the solemn offices of religion, such as praying and preaching. And by the places cited, it may appear to every impartial eye, that these

are no new lights or upstart notions, but agreeable to Holy Scripture, and the practice of the primitive Christians; to whose blessed example, holy and pious life, we desire in all things to conform ourselves.

The church of God is the pillar and ground of Truth: it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The church of God consists of living stones; they are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, who in life and conversation, shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light. This is a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. This is the true church and true religion, which we desire all people would seriously consider and diligently press after.

A WARNING GIVEN TO THE PRESENT GENERATION, TO CONSIDER THEIR WAYS AND TURN UNTO THE LORD; WHEREIN THEY ARE REMINDED OF THE LATE DREADFUL TEMPEST OF WIND.

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries."—Psalm cxxxv. 6, 7.

How gloriously has the Truth broken forth in this latter age of the world, and how has England been favoured with the bright sunshine of the gospel, and

the revelation of eternal truths! And how has God waited with much long-suffering and patience, to gather this nation to himself! How has the word of the Lord been proclaimed in towns and cities, and that with much dread, and great majesty and power! And how has the Lord stretched out his hand to the inhabitants of this island, day after day and year after year; that if by any means he might gather them in the arms of his love, and bless them, and make this land as a garden of pleasant plants, an eternal excellency, the joy of the whole earth! But O, how ill have many requited him for his kindness, and mercy, and long-suffering! How have they hardened their hearts, and rebelled against his Holy Spirit, and slighted the overtures of peace and reconciliation! How have they abused his servants, and shamefully treated those that came purely in love to their souls, and sought neither their silver nor gold, but their eternal welfare; and were willing to leave their families, friends and relations, and travel many hundreds of miles to invite others to come in and partake with them, in the glorious communion and fellowship of the saints in light! And O how shily and disdainfully have the poor worldlings and their blind priests (who were settled in the earth), looked upon these innocent servants of the Lord! And what an outcry have they raised against them! treating them as rogues and vagabonds (of whom yet the world was not worthy), and calling them seducers, and hereticks, and blasphemers, and jesuits, and fools, and madmen, and anything that malice or ignorance could suggest! And O what flouts and jeers, and stripes, and knocks, and bruises, have they met with, for their obedience to the Lord! and all this from a sort of men that called themselves Christians; from whose profession, one would expect *better things* at their hands.

And how ill both priests and people have requited the servants of the Lord, for their testimony against the works of darkness! Surely God will judge for these things. And notwithstanding the gospel has been so fully and demonstratively preached in this nation, yet how do sin and wickedness, injustice and oppression, fraud and violence, and all manner of abominations, run down the streets of towns, cities and villages, like a mighty stream! How madly and desperately do many lead their lives! What prodigious excess, and pride, and vanity, and superfluity, are found amongst the inhabitants of England! How do ungodly men devour the creation, and spend it upon their lusts, and weary themselves to commit iniquity! They bid defiance to all religion, and cast off all seriousness; they rant and swear, dance and sing, and fill the land with oaths and blasphemies. They wallow in pleasures, and indulge themselves in ease and softness perpetually; and are not valiant for the truth upon the earth, but live enslaved to the devil's kingdom. They speak every man vanity with his neighbour; and as for lying, and flattery, hypocrisy and deceit, there is no end of them. Hypocrites and formalists, shufflers and mammonists spare one another, wink at one another, daub one another, and bolster up one another in their unrighteous and ungodly ways and practices. And such God hates; and his fierce wrath will be manifest against them, except they repent. What a deep sleep and prodigious carelessness possesses the minds of such men! What do they study? What do they regard? Nothing but to satisfy their lusts, and please themselves. As for religion and meekness, sobriety and virtue, they are bantered and ridiculed, hissed and spurned at, and kicked off the *stage* of the world. Honesty, truth, and plain-

dealing, find no room in men's hearts; they cannot bear to be told of their faults; daub them over and wink at them, and then you please them. The consideration of these things cannot but wound any christian heart. Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity! The Lord, in mercy, put a stop to this torrent of wickedness! The Lord touch every soul with a deep sense of their provocations, and make them truly penitent, and incline their hearts to the serious study and practice of holiness! May the great men and rulers of the earth make it their business, both by their example and authority, to check vice and wickedness, and discourage and suppress all profaneness, debauchery and immorality. They may be instruments of much good in their generation, if they would zealously and impartially exercise that power which they have in their hands; otherwise they cannot escape, but their condemnation will be great in the day of the Lord. O, may the judgments of the Lord awaken people to a speedy and timely repentance! that they may learn righteousness, and know the things that belong to their everlasting peace, before they be hid from their eyes, and the wrath of God break forth against them, to their utter desolation.

What do people think of the late great stormy wind*—the most dreadful calamity of the kind per-

* This was a truly awful visitation: the following account of it is extracted from some authentic published Records of Remarkable Events.

"One of the most terrible Storms of Wind that was perhaps ever known in England, occurred on the 26th of November, 1703, attended with vivid flashes of lightning. It commenced about ten o'clock at night, and continued to rage with extreme violence till seven the next morning, when it gradually moderated. So tremendous were its effects, that people feared a total wreck of nature. Although the devastation was particularly afflictive in the Metropolis, yet *every part of the kingdom* experienced more or less of its

haps that ever afflicted this nation? How were thousands distressed then, both by sea and land! What a consternation was upon the minds of people—fear without and fear within! And what weeping, and crying, and lamentation, was there in many places! And how were many cut to the heart, and knew not what to say, nor what to do! For the hand of the Lord was upon them, and the arrows of the Almighty wounded them; and they knew not which way to escape, nor where to hide themselves from the fierceness of his indignation, who was come and coming to shake terribly the inhabitants of the earth. And then many a rotten, hypocritical heart, I believe, was ripped up, and the false covering torn off; men

ravages. The damage sustained within the City alone, was estimated at two millions sterling; besides vast loss in other parts of the Metropolis. Upwards of two thousand stacks of chimnies were blown down; and the streets covered with broken tiles and slates from the roofs of houses. The lead on the tops of several churches, was rolled up like skins of parchment; and at Westminster Abbey, Christ's Hospital, St. Andrew's Holborn, and many other places, it was carried off from the buildings. Several houses near Moorfields were levelled with the ground; as were about twenty others in the out-parts, together with a great number of brick walls, and gable ends of houses. Twenty-one persons were killed by the fall of the ruins, and about one hundred others greatly injured. All the ships in the river Thames, between London Bridge and Limehouse, except four, were forced from their moorings and thrown on shore; upwards of four hundred wherries were entirely lost; more than sixty barges were driven foul of London Bridge, and as many more were either sunk or staved between the Bridge and Hammersmith: these events were also attended with the loss of many lives. The loss sustained at Bristol, was computed at £200,000. But the destruction at sea far exceeded that on land; for in this dismal night, twelve men-of-war, with upwards of eighteen hundred men on board, perished within sight of their own shore; great numbers of merchantmen were also lost: and in fact the entire damage was so great, that its amount exceeded all computation."

saw their shortness in many things, and were ready to cry to the Lord for mercy; wished they had lived better lives, and that instead of talking of christianity, they had practised it. But alas, how soon are these things forgotten! And what amendment or reformation do we see in men's lives? He that was a hypocrite and a formalist, and a time-server and a hireling last year, for aught I see, is so still. He that was bitter, passionate, peevish, uncharitable, covetous, selfish and earthly-minded, and even without natural affection, is so still. He that was scraping and raking up wealth then, is doing so still. He that was puffed up with pride, and a loose liver, and a libertine, and strutted about with his sword and long powdered wig then, is and does so still. She that was dressed a-la-mode then, and could patch, and paint, and take her pleasure, and live in wantonness upon the earth, does so still. O how the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, abound amongst them! And the priest drives on his trade, and looks for his gain from his quarter; and his wife and children must be in the proud fashions, or else what will the neighours say of him? But how to rebuke vice sharply and boldly, and set a good example, he knows not; the poor man has no heart to it, he fears it will not be for his interest. And so he that was at ease in a dry and empty and fruitless profession, thinks himself secure still; the old clothes go on, and he runs the round of formality and hypocrisy. And the careless daughters still walk about the streets, with stretched-out necks, and their monstrous head-dresses, mincing as they go, so delicate, as if the ground were not good enough for them to tread upon. Is this our improvement upon God's judgments—our mourning in sackcloth and ashes? Oh the incorrigibleness of mankind! He that could

fight and swear, and curse and damn, and revel and be drunk, and cheat and lie last year, for aught I see, can do so still. And few are humbled under the hand of the Lord as they ought to be: few mourn in secret, and turn unto the Lord, and seriously lay things to heart, and consider their latter end. But they go on, every man in his own way, and set up their idols in their hearts, to commit abomination therewith. And the wanton, the voluptuary, and the ambitious, pursue their pleasures and delights, and worldly interests, with as much eagerness and resolution as ever. And is this a time, now when God has so eminently signalized his displeasure against us, to plead for sin and imperfection, and strengthen the hands of wickedness, and for any to stir up persecution? Surely we may find other work to do. What! are not the sins of this nation great enough? Is this a time to wink and spare, and daub and bolster up men in their sins? What! shall profaneness and the most scandalous immoralities still go unpunished? And shall the play-house still be suffered to laugh at religion, and droll upon everything that is serious, to debauch the age, and propagate a stock of atheists and libertines? Surely these things are not consistent with christianity: and truly whatever men may talk, nothing short of this, is like to avert those judgments that seem to hang over our heads. How it may please God to visit us the next time, we know not: but surely if we still go on in our impenitence and stiff-neckedness, it may be just with God to be more severe with us.

And now, that the Gospel may prosper, and righteousness increase, the church flourish, and truth and peace, love and good works take place in the earth, is the desire of my soul.

The 15th of the Second Month (called April), 1704.

A LETTER

FROM

ELIZABETH WEBB

TO

ANTHONY WILLIAM BŒHM;

CONTAINING

SOME ACCOUNT OF HER RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE,

WITH HIS

ANSWER.

TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE; AND PATIENCE, EXPERIENCE; AND EXPERIENCE, HOPE: AND HOPE MAKETH NOT ASHAMED; BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US — ROMANS V. 3, 4, 5.

INTRODUCTION.

The inducements to the publication of the following Letter at this distant period from the time it was written, are—the hope entertained by some devout persons, who have been edified by the spiritual experiences it contains, that it may prove instructing and comforting to others alike piously disposed—and the desire to prevent the further circulation of incorrect copies in manuscript, such having been handed about. It has therefore been revised, and is now recommended to the serious perusal of all those, who, having entered on a religious life, may desire to find instruction and encouragement to press forward with stability and humble resignation, through the various probations and conflicts attending them in their christian progress, that they may obtain, under their spiritual leader, the grace of God, "the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls."

It may also be satisfactory to the readers, to have some account of the writer, and of the person to whom the letter was written. They are therefore briefly informed that Elizabeth Webb was an acknowledged minister among the people called Quakers, who, from an apprehension of religious duty and the constraints of gospel love, went from Pennsylvania to Great Britain, to visit her Friends there, about the

year 1712. When in London she contracted some acquaintance with Anthony William Boehm, who was chaplain to Prince George of Denmark, the consort of Anne, Queen of England, and by birth a German, yet well acquainted with the English language: he died in the year 1722. The divers writings on religious subjects which he has left, shew him to have been a man of a truly pious and catholic disposition; which is also confirmed by the testimonials given of him by men of character in his time,* who, from their personal knowledge, mention him with great respect for his piety to God, and benevolence to mankind.

Philadelphia, Eleventh Month, 1781.

* In addition to the productions of his own pen, A. W. Boehm translated from the German a valuable work, entitled "True Christianity," written by John Arndt. Among those who bore testimony to his worth, as a religious character, was the pious Isaac Watts, who said of him, that he feared there were few such men in England, British or German, Episcopal or Nonconformist.

A LETTER

FROM

ELIZABETH WEBB TO ANTHONY WILLIAM BŒHM.

Worthy Friend,

The kind respect thou shewedst me, when in London, hath laid me under an obligation wherein I find my mind drawn to communicate to thee in the openings of divine love; on which I must desire thy favourable construction, as I am almost a stranger to thee. What I have to write, hath been on my mind these several weeks, in that pure, innocent love in which is the communion of saints. I have no learned method in which to deliver my religious experience, either by word or writing, but plainly and simply as the Spirit of truth directs: and I being the weaker vessel too, have the more need to beg to be excused. I shall not write from notions and speculations; I look on such things as unsafe, and I know they are many times unsound: but I shall write a small part of what I have gone through, and what my soul hath tasted of the good word of life, which is near; that we may have fellowship together in God the Father of our spirits, and in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; whom my soul hath known both in mercy and in judgment, to the mortifying, in a good degree, the fallen and corrupt nature, and

to the purifying of my heart so far, as that I can say to his praise, I do not see him through particular forms, sects, party impressions, or any such thing. No, my dear friend, I never sought after the Lord in these ways, nor for any of these ends; but I sought after him in my young years for salvation, and I still seek to him for the perfect restoration of my soul in him. I have nothing of my own to boast of, unless it be weakness and infirmities; but desire to rejoice in the cross of Christ, by which I am crucified to the world in a good degree, and the world to me; so that I can say, I die daily.

And as touching the fondness for education, religious profession and conversation, these things have cast no mist before my eyes. I can see, own and love the image of my Lord and Saviour in any sort of profession, if the soul hath been educated in the heavenly university or school of Christ. Nevertheless, we cannot see God in, or have fellowship with all sorts of conversations; that of the wicked is as if there was no God, "God is not in all their thoughts." And such as despise the image of the meek, humble Jesus, and will follow none of his precepts, nor his self-denying example, whilst they are here, the Lord will hereafter despise their image: for they shall have an image according to the seed or spirit in which they lay down their body: every seed shall have its own body in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and every one shall receive his own sentence.

Thou well observest that sin, self-love, self-will, &c., contract the soul into a very narrow compass; but the love of God breaks down all those walls of selfishness by which the soul is hedged in and restrained from universal love and benignity. This

is very true; but there are those who will not receive our love as it is in Jesus: nevertheless, some have felt [towards such], the flowings of the love and compassion of Him, who "would not the death of a sinner, but rather that all would return to Him, repent and live." I am a witness for the Lord, that the shedding abroad of his love over the inhabitants of this nation, hath been like showers of rain in the spring time: I well remember that I told a Friend in London, I felt the divine extendings of the love of God so to flow to the people, as I walked in the streets of the city, that I could have freely published the salvation of God, (which is near, and his righteousness which is ready to be revealed,) in the public places of concourse: the Friend said, he hoped it would not be required of me. This I mention to convince thee that universal love prevails in the hearts of some who are unknown to the world, and hardly known to their own brethren; and this is not to be wondered at; Eli did not know the inward exercise of Hannah, and the prophet Elijah thought he had been left alone, until the Lord told him he had seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to Baal; the prophet Samuel also, when he looked out with an eye of reason on the goodness of the stature of Eliab, said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him;" so now, unless the Lord be pleased to reveal things to us, we are liable to mistake. But blessed be the name of our most gracious God, who is the same that ever he was, he sees not as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

I received thy second letter just as I was going out of London, of which I have sent thee a copy, with some annotations: my view therein is, that if thou thinkst

it may be of benefit to any, thou mayst communicate it; if not, let it lie by thee.

I take great notice of thy christian love and good advice in thy second letter, and do accept of it very heartily; and can assure thee, that my labour is not to gather people into a formality, but I labour according as the Lord enables me, to gather souls to Christ, who is able to make the deceitful hearts of the children of men, plain, honest, upright and clean; and when "the inside is clean, the outside will be clean also." But I freely acknowledge that the glory of the true church or mystical body, or bride of Christ (which is made up of souls, who have entered into covenant with the Lord, to love and serve him for ever), is *within*; "her clothing is of wrought gold," and the curious needlework of virgin wisdom is upon her; for she hath been stripped of all her old rags or garments of righteousness and unrighteousness. Having been washed in pure water, her Bridegroom hath anointed her with holy oil—the holy unction of his Spirit; and he is clothing her with the beautiful garment of his salvation—the robe of his righteousness. She is depending on him for her daily bread; so that she is not eating her own bread, nor wearing her own apparel. She cannot be content with only bearing his name, but longs to be made more and more a partaker of his divine nature. And the love of her Lord hath been and still is so largely extended to her, with her love so to him, that she is wholly subject to him; he ruleth in love, and she obeys in love, and this makes all things easy. She hath no will of her own, but the will of her Lord is her will in all things: all his commands are pleasant to her, because she delights to wait on him, and to serve in his presence, and had rather be deprived of all outward

enjoyments, than of his presence, and the enjoyment of his favour. Her conversation is adorned with humility and meekness, her steps are comely in the eyes of her Beloved, "all her children are taught of the Lord, established in righteousness, and great is their peace." And my soul may say to the praise and glory of God, that no greater comfort can be enjoyed on this side the grave, than to be a child or member of this church.

And now, my dear friend, I will give thee a short account of the dealings of the Lord with me in my young years; how he brought my soul through fire and water. For what end this has lived in my mind I know not, except it be for our spiritual communion; but when my soul is lowest and nearest to the Lord in the simplicity of truth, then is my heart opened and my mind filled with divine love respecting this matter. I desire thee to peruse it inwardly, when thou art retired, and not to judge of it before thou hast gone through it; and then judge as freely as thou pleasest:—

I was baptized and educated in the way of the church of England; and went to school to a minister thereof, whom I loved and honoured greatly; he showed great kindness and tenderness to me. In those days I looked on the ministers to be like angels, that brought glad tidings to the children of men. When I was about fourteen years of age, I went to live at a knight's house, who kept a chaplain: I observed his conversation, and saw it was vain, and I thought it ought not to be so, and was troubled in my mind; for I then began to think on my latter end and also on eternity, and I had no assurance of salvation or a state of happiness, if it should please the Lord to send the messenger of death to call me away.

So the fear of the Lord laid hold on my mind, and I began to search the Scriptures, and found they testified that "the wicked should be turned into hell, and all those that forget God." And I saw that both priests and people did too generally "forget God," as soon as they came off their knees, or from their devotion. I was much afraid of hell, and wanted an assurance of a place in the kingdom of heaven. Then I began to think on the great promises that were made for me in my baptism, as they called it, (whereby they said I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, &c.,) that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and should keep God's holy will and commandments. I thought indeed this was the way to obtain a place in the kingdom of heaven; but I had no power to do what I ought to do, nor to forsake what I ought to forsake, for I was very proud, vain and airy. But as I was thus inwardly exercised, and outwardly searching the Scriptures, my understanding was more and more opened. I read and took notice that the ministers of Christ, whom he qualified, and sent forth to preach, were to do it freely; for Christ said, "Freely ye have received, freely give," and that those who run when the Lord never sent them, "should not profit the people at all." Many such things opened in my mind, and I used to ponder them in my heart; also the promises to the flock in the 34th of Ezekiel, where the Lord promised to bind up that which was sick. These and similar portions of the Scriptures were very comfortable to me, for I was sick of my sins, and my heart was broken many times before the Lord. I thought, Oh! that I had lived in the days of Christ, I would surely have been one of those that followed him; and I grieved

because the Jews crucified him. Thus I loved Christ in the outward appearance, and could have said, (as Peter said), far be it from thee Lord to suffer: yet I did not know he was so near me by his Holy Spirit. But I was convinced that the hireling shepherds, who teach for hire and divine for money,* were not the ministers of Christ, by the testimony of the prophets and of Christ himself, who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." So I left going to hear them, and walked alone: for I had gone till a fear followed me into the worship-house, and I thought it would be just upon me, if I was made an example for my inattention to the Spirit of truth. When I was about fifteen years old, it pleased God to send the spirit of grace and supplication into my heart, by which I prayed fervently unto the Lord: there was a divine breathing in my soul: I had no life in my forms of prayer, except that one which Christ taught his disciples, for which I have always had a reverent esteem: but when I was in a state to pray, I found that the Spirit made intercession in me and for me, according to the present want and necessity of my soul. I remember the expressions that used to run through my mind were—"O Lord! preserve me in thy fear and in thy truth—O Lord! shew me thy way, and make known thy mind and will unto me;"—and I thought I was ready to obey it, and much desired to know the people of God; for my soul cried, "O Lord! where dost thou feed thy flock; why should I be as one that is turned aside from the flocks of thy companions?" O, the drawing cords of thy divine love! O, thou didst draw my soul with longings and breathings after the only true God, and of Jesus Christ! There was then no condemnation for the sins of ignorance, which the

* Micah iii. 11.

Lord winked at; but he called me to repent and forsake my pride and vain company, which was a great cross to the will of the flesh. Yet I took it up for several months; and while I did so, my soul had great peace and divine comfort; so that many times the enjoyment of divine love was more to me than my natural food, or any outward thing. I remember when the family used to ask me why I did not come to meat, I used to think I had meat to eat that they knew nothing of. And in those times of retirement, I had manifestations of sufferings that I should go through, and a sight of several things which I met with since; and in those times I walked alone.

I was convinced that the Quakers held the principles of truth, and that their ministry was the true ministry: but I dwelt then far from any of them, only thus it had happened:—When I was about twelve years old, I was at a meeting or two of theirs, and the doctrine of one man that preached there, proved to me, (as the wise man terms it), like bread cast upon the waters, for it was found after many days: the sound of his voice seemed to be in my mind when I was alone, and some of his words came fresh into my remembrance; and the voice and the words suited with the exercise of the mind. At that time I met also with a little book of theirs, [and finding] the doctrine it contained agreed with the doctrine of the apostles, I was confirmed in my judgment, that their profession agreed with the truth: but I did not join with them; for by that time flesh and blood began to be very uneasy under the yoke of retirement, and to groan for liberty. I was about sixteen years old; and the subtle enemy lay near, and did not want instruments: so I was persuaded by reasoning with flesh and blood, that I was young, and might take a

little more pleasure, and might serve God when I was older. I let go my exercise of watching and praying, left off retirement, and let out my love to visible objects. Pride and vanity grew up again; the divine, sweet, meek, loving Spirit withdrew, and I could not find it again when I pleased, although I did seek it sometimes: for I could have been pleased with the sweet comforts of his love, yet I did not like to bear the daily cross. And being convinced *that* was [required by] the Quakers' principles, and believing they did enjoy the sweetness of divine love in their meetings, I went sometimes a great way to a meeting to seek for divine refreshment there; but to no purpose; for I was like some dry stick that had no sap nor virtue, unto which rain and sunshine, summer and winter are all alike.—Thus it was with me for about three years.

Oh, the remembrance of that mispent time! Oh, the tribulation that came on me for my disobedience, is never to be forgotten! But when I was about nineteen years of age, it pleased the Almighty to send his quickening Spirit again into my heart, and his light shined into my mind; all my transgressions were set in order before me, and I was made deeply sensible of my great loss. And then, oh then! the vials of the wrath of an angry Father, were poured out on the transgressing nature. Oh, then I cried, "woe is me! woe is me! I am undone—I have slain the babe of grace—I have crucified the Lord of life and glory to myself afresh, although I have not put him to open shame." For I had been preserved in moral honesty in all respects, to that degree, that I durst not tell a lie, or speak an evil word, and could be trusted in any place, and in any thing; for this would be in my mind many times, that if I was not

faithful in the unrighteous mammon I should not be trusted with heavenly treasure. But notwithstanding my righteousness, He whose eye penetrates all hearts, found me so guilty, that I thought there was no mercy for me. Oh! that testimony of our blessed Lord Jesus, I found to be true, viz: Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, there is no admittance into the kingdom of heaven or favour of God. But after many days and nights of sorrow and great anguish, having no soul to speak to, it came into my mind to give myself up into the hands of God; and I said, "O Lord! if I perish, it shall be at the gate of thy mercy; for if thou cast me into hell, I cannot help myself; therefore I will give up my soul, my life, and all into thy holy hand: do thy pleasure by me; thy judgments are just, for I have slighted thy sweet love and have slain the babe of grace." And as I sunk down into death, and owned and submitted to the judgments of God, my heart was broken, which before was hard; and it pleased my merciful Father to cause his divine, sweet love to spring again in my hard, dry, and barren soul, as a spring of living water; the fire of the wrath of God was mightily abated, and the compassionate bowels of a tender Saviour my soul felt. I had living hope raised in my mind: yet greater afflictions came afterwards; so that I may say by experience, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way," indeed, "that leadeth unto life." And I have cause to believe, none but such as are made willing to be stript of all that belongs to self or the old man, and do become as little children, can rightly or truly enter in at the strait gate. And I do find by experience, that no vulture's eye, no venomous beast, nor lofty lion's whelp, can

look into or tread in this holy, narrow way—Oh! the longing there is in my soul, that all might consider it. But to proceed :—

I thought all was well, [and said in my heart,] "The worst is now over, and I am again taken into the favour of God :" so I was led into an elevation of joy, though inwardly in silence. But in a few days my soul was led into a wilderness where there was no way, no guide, no light that I could see, but darkness such as might be felt indeed : for the horrors of it were such, that when it was night I wished for morning, and when it was morning I wished for evening. The Lord was near, but I knew it not : he had brought my soul into the wilderness, and there he pleaded with me by his fiery law and righteous judgments. The day of the Lord came upon me, which burnt as an oven in my bosom, till all pride and vanity were burnt up, my former delights were gone, my old heavens were passed away within me, as with fire, and I had as much exercise in my mind of anguish and sorrow as I could bear, day and night for several months, and not a drop of divine comfort. I could compare my heart to nothing, unless it were a coal of fire, or a hot iron ; no brokenness of heart or tenderness of spirit ; although I cried to God continually in the deep distress of my soul, yet not one tear could issue from my eyes. Oh! the days of sorrow and nights of anguish that I went through, no tongue can utter, nor heart conceive which hath not gone through the like. I could have wished I had been some other creature, that I might not have known such anguish and sorrow ; for I thought all other creatures were in their proper places. But my troubles were aggravated by the strong oppression and temptation of Satan, who was very unwilling to

lose his subject: so he raised all his forces, and made use of all his armour which he had in the house: and I found him to be like a strong man armed indeed; for he would not suffer me to enter into resignation, but would have me look into mysteries that appertain to salvation, with an eye of carnal reason. And because I could not so comprehend, he caused me to question the truth of all things that are left upon record in the Holy Scriptures, and would have persuaded me into the Jews' opinion concerning Christ; and many other baits and resting places he laid before me. But my soul hungered after the true bread, the bread of life, which came from God out of heaven, which Christ testified of, (see John vi. beginning at the 27th verse, to the end), which I had felt near, and my soul had tasted of. And although the devil prompted me with his temptations, my soul could not feed on them, but cried continually, "Thy presence, O Lord! or else I die—Oh! let me feel thy saving arm, or else I perish—O Lord! give me faith."

Thus was my soul exercised in earnest supplications unto God night and day; and yet I went about my outward occasions, and made my complaint to none but God only. And I have often since considered that the subtle serpent finds suitable baits for the soul that can be content to feed on any thing below the enjoyment of God. So having known the terrors of God and the subtle wiles of Satan, I am concerned sometimes to persuade people to repent, and to warn them to flee from the wrath to come.

Now all my faith which I had before, whilst in disobedience, proved like building on a sandy foundation. All the comfort I used to have in reading the Scriptures, was taken away; and I durst not read for some time, because it added to my condemnation.

So I was left to God alone, who caused me to feel a little hope at times, like a glimmering of light underneath my troubles, which was some stay to my mind: if it had not been so, I had fallen into despair. But I much desired to be brought through my troubles the right way, and not to shake off or get over them in my own time. I had not freedom to make known my condition to any person; for I used to think, if the Lord did not help me, in vain was the help of man: and I have since seen that it was well I did not, on several accounts; for I might have come to a loss if I had done so, as it was the will of God to humble me, and to turn up and throw down all *that* which might be imputed to man or self, that I might know the work or building of the Lord to be raised from the foundation of his own power, where there is none of man's building; that all the glory might be given to him alone. For we are very apt to say in effect, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I of Christ," as if Christ was divided: but the Lord will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. For as thou, my friend, well observest, the chief that we ought to labour for, is to make people sensible of their corruption, to direct them to the word nigh, and to be good examples to them.

So, in the Lord's due and appointed time, when he had seen my suffering of that fiery kind to be sufficient, he was pleased to cause his divine love to flow in my bosom in an extraordinary manner; and the Holy Spirit of divine light and life did overcome my soul. Then a divine sense and understanding was given me by which to know the power and also the love of God, in sending his only Son out of his bosom into the world, to take upon him a body of flesh,

wherein he did go through the whole process of suffering for the salvation of mankind; and so did break through and break open the gates of death, and repaired the breach that old Adam had made between God and man, and restored the path for souls to come to God.

And the Almighty was pleased at that time to make my simple soul sensible, that he did send the spirit of his Son into my heart, in order to lead me through the process of his suffering; that as he died for sin, so I might die to sin, by bearing the daily cross, and living in self-denial, humility, and obedience to God, my Heavenly Father, in all things he should require of me. And then the baptism of the Holy Ghost, compared to water as well as fire, my soul came to witness; and the ministration of judgment and condemnation I saw had a glory in it, which made way for the ministration of life. The axe of God's word was laid to the evil root of the tree, and the voice of him who preached repentance my soul heard, that called for the mountains to be laid low, and the valleys to be raised, viz. the mountains of my natural temper, that a plain way might be made for the ransomed soul to walk in. And the Lord shewed me how John the Baptist came to be counted the greatest prophet that was born of a woman, viz. because he was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, and is rightly termed the mourner, and how the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he that is under his ministration only, which was to decrease; but the ministration of Jesus was to increase, whose baptism is with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. Then I came to witness that it is indeed the work of God to believe rightly and truly on Him whom God hath sent; that this

purifying, saving faith is the gift of God, and the very spring and vital principle of it, divine love. Then I mourned over Him whom I had pierced with my unbelief and hardness of heart; and I did eat my bread with weeping, and mingled my drink with tears.

I was between nineteen and twenty years of age when these great conflicts were on my mind: by them I was brought very humble; and I entered into solemn covenant with God Almighty, that I would answer his requirings, if it were to the laying down my natural life. But when it was showed me that I ought to take up the cross in a little thing, I had like to have hearkened to the reasoner again, and been disobedient in the day of small things: for although I had gone through so much inward exercise, yet I was afraid of displeasing my superiors, being then a servant to great persons. It was shewn me, that I should not give flattering titles to man; and I was threatened inwardly, that if I would not be obedient to the Lord's requirings, he would take away his good Spirit from me again. So I was in a strait; I was afraid of displeasing God, and afraid of displeasing man; till at last I was charged by the Spirit, with honouring man more than God: for in my address to God I did use the plain language, but when I spoke to man or woman I must speak otherwise, or else they would be offended. Some would argue, that God Almighty being that only One, therefore the singular language was proper to him alone; and man being made up of compound matter, the plural language was more proper to him, &c. Oh! the subtle twistings of proud Lucifer that I have seen, would be too large to insert; but although God Almighty is that only One, yet is he the Being of all

beings, for in him we live, move, and have our being. But let the cover be what it would, I had Scripture on my side, which they called their rule; and I knew proud man disdained to receive that language from an inferior, which he gave to the Almighty. So it became a great cross to me: but it was certainly a letting thing in the way of the progress of my soul, until I gave up to the Lord's requirings in this small thing. These things I signify to thee, dear friend, in great simplicity, that thou mayst see how the Lord leads out of the vain customs that are in the world, not only in what I have mentioned, but also in many other things; and into that humble, self-denying way which Christ both taught and practised, when he was visible among men. Christ is the true christians' pattern, and his Spirit their leader.

And now I shew thee this in truth and sincerity, because I would not be misunderstood by thee, viz. I am a single soul, wholly devoted to the Lord, and so do not plead for a form for form's sake; neither do I plead for a people as a people; for we are grown to be a mixed multitude, much like the children of Israel, when they were in the wilderness. But this I may say to the praise and glory of God, the principle that we make profession of, is the very Truth, viz. Christ in the male and in the female, the hope of glory: and Christ, thou knowest, is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and none comes to God but by him. So there is a remnant, who, like Joshua and Caleb of old, are true to the Lord their spiritual Leader, and follow him faithfully; and they stand clear in their testimonies against all dead formalities, which are but as images, when the vital principle, viz. the divine love is withdrawn. And yet as the spirit of Jesus leads out of all vain customs and

traditions which are in the world, and into the plain, humble, meek, self-denying life and conversation which Christ walked in while he was visible among men, I could wish all to follow the leadings of his Spirit herein, that thereby they may confess him before men. But if it please the Almighty to accept of souls, without leading them through such fiery trials as he brought me through, or without requiring such things of them as he required of me, far be it from me to judge that such have not known the Lord, or the indwellings of his love, if the fruits of the spirit of Jesus be plain upon them: for every tree is known by its fruits, and to our own master we must stand or fall. But dear friend, as thou well observedst, purification is a gradual work—I may say so by experience: for when the old adversary could no longer draw me out into vain talking and foolish jesting, then he perplexed me with vain thoughts; some of which were according to my natural disposition, and some of them quite contrary. Oh! I cried mightily unto the Lord for power over vain thoughts; for they were a great trouble to me; and I stood in great fear lest one day or other I should fall by the hand of the enemy. But the Lord spake comfortably to my soul in his own words left upon record, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and the Lord gave me an evidence along with it, that my soul was one of that little flock. Another time, when I was very low in my mind, these words sprang with life and virtue, viz. "Although thou hast lain amongst the pots, yet I will give thee the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers of yellow gold." Oh! it was wonderfully comfortable to me when the Holy Ghost did bring a promise to my rememberance, and gave

me an evidence that it was my portion. So I pondered on this, concerning "the wings of a dove," and I thought it must needs be the wing of innocency, whereby my soul might ascend unto God by prayer, meditation, and divine contemplation. I took delight to pray in secret and fast in secret, from the secret outgoings of my mind as well as I could, and my Heavenly Father who seeth and heareth in secret, did reward me openly. For then, when I went to meetings, I did not sit in darkness, dryness and barrenness, as I used to do in the times of my disobedience; but I did reap the benefit of the end of the coming of Christ, who said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The thief had, in the time of my disobedience, stolen my soul from Jesus, who said, "Whoso loveth father or mother, &c., or his own life more than me, is not worthy of me." So it had been with me, and I missed the benefit of reaping the end of his coming, for several years; but he in mercy being returned, afforded my bowed-down soul the enjoyment of his divine presence, and was pleased to cause his love, (which is the true life of the soul,) so to abound in my bosom in meetings, that my cup did overflow. And I was constrained, under a sense of duty, to kneel down in the congregation, and confess to the goodness of God, also to pray to him for the continuation of it, and for power whereby I might be enabled to walk worthy of so great a favour, benefit and mercy, that I had received at his bountiful hand. And I remember after I had made public confession to the goodness of God, my soul was as if it had been in another world: it was so enlightened and enlivened by the divine love, that I was in love

with the whole creation of God, and I saw every thing to be good in its place. I was shewed things ought to be kept in their proper places, that the swine ought not to come into the garden, and the clean beasts ought not to be taken into the bed-chamber; that as it was in the outward, so it ought to be in the inward and new creation. So every thing began to preach to me; the very fragrant herbs, and beautiful, innocent flowers had a speaking voice in them to my soul, and things seemed to have another relish with them than before. The judgments of God were sweet to my soul, and I was made to call to others sometimes, to come taste and see how good the Lord is, and to exhort them to prove the Lord, by an obedient, humble, innocent walking before him, and then they would see that he would pour out of his spiritual blessings in so plentiful a manner, that there would not be room enough to contain them; but the overflowings would return to him who is the Fountain, with thanksgivings, &c. And I was made to warn people, that they should not provoke the Lord by disobedience: for although he bears and suffers long, as he did with the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, yet such shall know him to be a God of justice and judgment, and shall be made so to confess one day.

Thus, dear friend, I have given thee a plain, but true account of my qualification and call to the service of the ministry. But it was several years before I came to a freed state, or even temper of mind; for sometimes clouds would arise and interpose between my soul and the rising Sun, and I was brought down into the furnace often, and found by experience that every time my soul was brought down as into the furnace of affliction, that it did still come up more

clean and bright; and although the cloud did interpose between me and the rising Sun, yet when the Sun of Righteousness did appear again, he brought healing as under his wings, and was nearer than before. Thus dear friend, I express things in simplicity, as they were represented to me in the manifestation of them in the morning of my days. I came to love to dwell with judgment, and used often to pray, saying, "O Lord! search me and try me, for thou knowest my heart better than I know it; and I pray thee let no deceitfulness of unrighteousness lodge therein; but let thy judgments pass upon every thing that is contrary to thy pure, divine nature." Thus my soul used to breathe to the Lord continually, and hunger and thirst after a more full enjoyment of his presence. Although he is a consuming fire to the corrupt nature of the old man, yet my soul loved to dwell with him. I found many sorts of corruptions would be endeavouring to spring up again; but I resigned up my mind to the Lord, with desires that he would feed me with food convenient for me. And this I can say by experience, that the soul that is born of God doth breathe to him as constantly by prayer, as the sucking child, when it is born into the world, doth draw in and breathe out the common air; even so the child of God doth draw in and breathe forth the breath of life, by which man was made a living soul to God. And this breathing that is pure and divine, all that are in the old man or fallen nature, know nothing of; it is a mystery to them; but the babe in Christ knows it to be true. And although the children in our Father's family are of several ages, growths or statures, both in strength and understanding, yet this I have observed in all my travels, that those who live to God,

continue in a state of breathing to him while here, and hunger and thirst after a more full enjoyment of his divine presence; that as every day brings us nearer to the grave, so every day the soul may be brought into a more divine union and communion with God. It is a certain sign to me, of the divine life and health of a soul, if I find it sweetly breathing unto the Lord, and hungering and thirsting after his righteousness. And it is very evidently seen, and easily known by the conversation of persons, what manner of spirit doth govern in them; although many will not believe these things if declared to them; neither will they try whether it be so or not, but they are satisfied with the husk of religion. Oh! what will they do when the rudiments and beggarly elements of this world fall off, and all our works must pass through the fire: my very soul mourns for them; but we must press forwards and leave them, if they will not arise out of their false rest.

Dear friend, as thou well observest, it is a great help to the soul to know its own corruptions, and from whence it is fallen, that it may know whither to return. These things are very true; the knowledge of them hath been a great comfort to me, and so have the experiences of the servants of the Lord, agreeably to the testimonies left on record, which are as waymarks to the spiritual traveller; and we have a great privilege in and by them: but above all in and by Christ our holy Pattern and heavenly Leader, who hath said, "My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." My soul prizeth the knowledge of his footsteps, the leading of his Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, whom the Father hath sent, to lead us into all truth. And O saith my soul, that

we may follow the leadings of our unerring Guide in all things that he may lead us into! I have good cause to believe, he will bring us through all tribulations to the honour of God and our comfort: for the Lord hath brought my soul through many trials, one after another, as he saw meet, some more of which I may give a hint of, viz. :—

After my inward tribulation was abated, then outward trials began; for there were some of no small account, that endeavoured with all their might and cunning, to hinder the work from prospering in me: and as Saul hunted David, and sought to take away his natural life, so these hunted my soul to take away its life, which it had in God: but all wrought together for my good. I have often seen, and therefore may say, the Lord knoweth what is best for his children, better than we know for ourselves: and so my enemies, instead of driving my soul away from God, drove it nearer to him. This trial caused me to prove the spirit which had the exercise of my mind, and I found it to be the Spirit of Truth, which the worldly and self-minded cannot receive; for I found the nature of it to be harmless and holy, and to lead me to love mine enemies, to pity them and pray for them. This love was my preservation; and as I gave up in obedience to the operation and requiring of this meek Spirit, it ministered such peace to my soul, as the world cannot give. But there was a disposition in me to please all, which I found very hard for me to be weaned from, so as to stand single to God: for when I did fear man, I had nothing but anguish and sorrow; and I used often to walk alone and pour out my complaint to the Lord. But after a long time, when the Lord had tried my fidelity to him as he saw meet, one day as I was sitting in a

meeting in silence, waiting upon the Lord, to know my strength renewed in him and by him, this portion of Scripture was given to me, viz. "Comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." This brought great comfort to my soul; I treasured it in my heart, and made this observation, that from that time the Lord gave my soul (as the apostle Peter expresses it), a more abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom or New Jerusalem, whose walls are salvation and her gates praise; my mind was brought into more stillness, and troublesome thoughts were in a good degree expelled; my outward enemies grew weary of their work and failed of their hope. The praise I freely, in great humility, offer up and ascribe to Almighty God; for it was his own work to preserve me from many strong temptations.

So after I had [been favoured with] peace at home every way, I was drawn by the Spirit of love, to travel into the north of England. On my journey my soul had many combats with the evil spirit: when I was asleep he tormented me as long as he could. I have, indeed, had a long war with the devil many ways; abundance of courage was given to me to make war with him; and I always gained the victory when cowardly, fearful nature was asleep, which was comfortable to my mind: and I did hope that the Lord would give me perfect victory over the devil when I was awake, as he had let me see it to be so when I was asleep. The Spirit which led me forth, was to me like a needle of a compass, touched with a loadstone; for so it pointed where I ought to go, and when I came to the far end of the journey.

In those days I had certain manifestations of many things in dreams, which did come to pass according to their significations; I was many times forewarned of enemies, and so was better able to guard against them. I travelled in great fear and humility, and the Lord was with me to his glory and my comfort, and brought me home again in peace.

In the year 1697, in the Sixth Month, as I was sitting in the meeting in Gloucester, which was then the place of my abode, my mind was gathered into perfect stillness for some time, and my spirit was as if it had been carried away into America; and after it returned, my heart was as if it had been dissolved with the love of God, which flowed over the great ocean, and I was constrained to kneel down and pray for the seed of God in America. The concern never went out of my mind day nor night, until I went to travel there in the love of God, which is so universal that it reaches over sea and land. But when I looked at my concern with an eye of human reason, it seemed to be very strange and hard to me; for I knew not the country, nor any that dwelt therein. I reasoned much concerning my own unfitness, and when I let in such reasonings, I had nothing but death and darkness; and trouble attended my mind: but when I resigned up my all to the Lord, and gave up in my mind to go, then the divine love sprang up in my heart, and my soul was at liberty to worship the Lord as in the land of the living. Thus I tried and proved the concern in my own heart, till at last these words ran through my mind with authority,—"The fearful and unbelieving shall have their portion with the hypocrite, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." This brought a dread; I then told my hus-

band that I had a concern to go to America; and asked him if he could give me up. He said he hoped it would not be required of me; but I told him it was; and that I should not go without his free consent, which seemed a little hard to him at first. A little while after, I was taken with a violent fever, which brought me so weak, that all who saw me thought I should not recover. But I thought my day's work was not done, and my chief concern in my sickness was about going to America. Some were troubled that I had made it public, because they thought I should die, and people would speak reproachfully of me; and said, if I did recover, the ship would be ready to sail before I should be fit to go, &c. But I thought if they would only carry me and lay me down in the ship, I should be well: for the Lord was very gracious to my soul in the time of my sickness, and gave me a promise that his presence should go with me. And then my husband was made very willing to give me up; he said, if it were for seven years, rather than to have me taken from him for ever. So at last all those difficulties passed over, and I sailed from Bristol in the Ninth Month, 1697, with my companion Mary Rogers. The dangers we were in at sea, and the faith and courage the Lord gave to my soul, would be too large here to relate; for I had such an evidence of my being in my proper place, that the fear of death was taken away. Oh! it is good to trust in the Lord and be obedient to him, for his mercies endure for ever.

About the middle of the Twelfth Month, 1697, through the good providence of the Almighty, we arrived in Virginia. As I travelled along the country from one meeting to another, I observed great numbers of black people that were in slavery. They

were a strange people to me; I wanted to know whether the visitation of God was to their souls or not; and I observed their conversation, to see if I could discern any good in them. After I had travelled about four weeks, as I was in bed one morning in a house in Maryland, after the sun was up I fell into a slumber, and dreamed I was a servant in a great man's house, and that I was drawing water at a well to wash the uppermost rooms of the house. When I was at the well, a voice came to me, which bid me go and call other servants to help me, and I went presently. But as I was going along in a very pleasant green meadow, a great light shined about me, which exceeded the light of the sun, and I walked in the midst. As I went on in the way, I saw a chariot drawn with horses coming to meet me, and I was in care lest the light that shone about me should frighten the horses, and cause them to throw down the people whom I saw in the chariot. When I came to them, I looked on them, and I knew they were the servants I was sent to call: I saw they were both white and black people, and I said unto them, "Why have you staid so long?" They said, "The buckets were frozen, we could come no sooner"—So I was satisfied the call of the Lord was unto the black people as well as the white; and I saw the fulfilling of it in part, before I returned out of America, with many more remarkable things, which would be too tedious here to mention. But O how great is the condescension and goodness of God to poor mankind! it is a good observation on the tender dealings of our Heavenly Father, to set up our Ebenezer, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us:"—and indeed I may say to his praise, it hath been [so with me] through many straits and difficulties, more than I can number; and

they have all wrought together for the good of my soul. And I have cause to believe, that every son or daughter whom he receives, he chastens, tries, and proves; and those who do not bear the chastisements of God, do prove bastards and not sons. But I may say, as one did of old, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted," &c., and that it is good to follow the leadings of the Spirit of God, as faithful Abraham did, who was called the friend of God, and who did not withhold his only son when the Lord called for him. And it is my belief the Lord will try his chosen ones as gold is tried, and will yet refine them as gold is refined. And what if he bring us yet down again into the furnace, which way it shall please him, until we are seven times refined; we shall be the better able to bear the impression of his image upon us in all our conversation. And if the day should come, wherein none shall buy nor sell, that have not the mark of the beast, either in their right hands or in their foreheads, it is but what hath been told us beforehand: and those that will know an overcoming, it must be by the blood of the Lamb, (viz. by abiding in the meek love and suffering seed), and by the word of their testimony; not loving their lives unto death. We may observe that those who had not the mark of the beast in their foreheads, if they had it in their right hands it would do; they could shew it if there was occasion, to take off a stroke.

O the mystery of iniquity, how secretly it works! We may well say, the testimony that Jesus bore to the Scribe who desired to follow him, is very true—"Foxes have holes, and the fowls of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." O innocent Truth! O plain, meek,

humble Jesus! Where doth he repose? Where doth he reign without molestation?

Dear friend, excuse my freedom with thee, for the love of God constraineth me: and I do believe the Lord will shew thee yet further, what testimony thou must bear for his name, and what thou must suffer for his sake, if faithful. For trying times will come, and offences will be given and taken; but there is nothing will offend those that love the Lord Jesus above all. Many murmured and were offended at Jesus when he told them the truth, and that which was of absolute necessity for all to know and witness in themselves; as we read in the 6th of John, beginning at the 32nd verse. By that time he had done, many of his disciples went from him: then said he to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" but Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." So God hath given the faithful to believe; yea, and we are sure that the Spirit of Truth is come, that leads the followers of it into all truth; and that Christ who is one with his Spirit, and who was once offered to bear the sins of many, has appeared again the second time without sin unto salvation. Oh! surely the goodness of God hath been very great to the children of men from age to age, and from one generation to another, ever since the fall of our first parents. The more my mind penetrates into it, the more I am like to be swallowed up in admiration of his condescension and goodness through all his dispensations, but above all in the manifestation of Jesus Christ, our holy Pattern and heavenly Leader. O my soul! praise him for the knowledge of his holy footsteps, whom God gave for a light to us Gentiles,

and to be his salvation unto the ends of the earth; and hath given his Spirit to dwell in us, and accepted our souls to dwell in him. O admirable goodness! Shall we leave him? He is the Word of eternal life, and whither shall we go? So far as any are followers of Jesus, so far I desire to follow them or to be one with them, and no farther. Let these do what they will, if any will go back into the sea, out of which the beast ariseth, and receive his mark, our Leader is not to be blamed; He holds on his way, and causes his trumpet to be blown in Zion, and an alarm to be beaten in his holy mountain: and whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning, if the sword of the Lord do come, (in any kind), and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head; he heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning: but he that taketh warning shall deliver his own soul. Great is the duty of the watchman, and great is the kindness of God as expressed in the 33rd chapter of Ezekiel. O my dear friend! my heart is full of the goodness of the Lord. But I must stop writing, lest I should be tedious to thee; and indeed, it might be accounted foolishness for me to write after this manner, to one in thy station. But I find a constraint thereto, and must commit it to thy judgment, be it what it may: and this I will assure thee, my heart is plain; I mean as I speak, and I find it safest so to do, and to keep in humble obedience to the Lord in whatsoever he requires of me. Yet I know the wisdom of God appears to be foolishness in the eyes of the wise men of this world, and we know that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and will prove so in the latter end to those poor souls that so mightily esteem it. But the souls of the righteous are in the

hand of the Lord, and then shall no torment touc them; although in the sight of the unwise, both the life and their death are taken for misery—nevei theless, they are in peace.

If thou findest anything on thy mind, please to l me have it. So in the love that is pure, doth my so greet thee, and remain

Thy friend in true sincerity,

ELIZABETH WEBB.

THE ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

DEAR FRIEND,

I am heartily glad you are come to town agai so that I might have an opportunity of seeing y before you leave England. Your letter hath be read with great satisfaction by my myself and ma of my friends; but I have not been able to recover yet, out of their hands. Some have even desired transcribe it for their edification, and this is t reason I did not send you presently an answer; thou it hath been all along upon my mind to express t satisfaction I had at the reading thereof, and to assu you how welcome it is to me to meet with a fello pilgrim travelling to the city adorned with twel pearls, which is to receive all such who have ma up the family of God in this wicked generation, a have been presented for his peculiar people in parts and denominations of christendom. . . . had a mind to have given you at large my thoug upon your letter. True love is of an universal a overflowing nature, and not easily shut up by nam

notions, peculiar modes, forms, and hedges of men; and if you will be pleased to correspond with me, even after your return from America, I shall always be ready to answer your kindness, and to make up again wherein I have been wanting at present; and so recommend you to the infinite favour and protection of the Lord.

I remain in sincerity,

Your friend and servant,

ANTHONY WILLIAM BŒHM.

Strand, Jan. 2, 1712.

MEMOIR

OF

EVAN BEVAN,

WHO DIED AT PONTYMOIL, IN MONMOUTHSHIRE,

THE 17TH OF THE SECOND MONTH, 1746;

WITH HIS

LETTER TO A FRIEND,

CONTAINING AN

ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVINCEMENT, &C.

MARK THE PERFECT MAN, AND BEHOLD THE UPRIGHT: FOR THE END OF THAT MAN IS PEACE.—PSALM XXXVII. 37.

MEMOIR OF EVAN BEVAN,*

WITH HIS

LETTER TO A FRIEND, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVINCEMENT, &c.

Evan Bevan was the son of Charles Bevan of Lantwit Vardre, in Glamorganshire, and was born about the year 1678. His father having determined to give him a liberal education, sent him to the university of Oxford, where he made considerable

* W. Sewel, in his *History of Friends*, designates him "Evan Jevans," and it seems, not without some reason: in the Testimony of his Monthly Meeting, he is called "Evan Bevan alias Jevans," and so he sometimes signed himself, but generally only, "Evan Bevan."

Signed by the Appointm
and in behalf of the s.d Meet
Evan Bevan

Thy Lo: Dr.d
Evan Bevan at Jeremy

progress in various parts of literature. He subsequently applied himself to the study and practice of the law in Glamorganshire, and served the office of deputy-sheriff of that county with reputation. But after a time, he was visited in an extraordinary manner with the convictions of the Holy Spirit; and whilst judgment was thus passing over the transgressing nature in him, he was brought into deep sorrow and anguish, until after long mourning and various baptisms, he was favoured to know mercy to cover the judgment seat: the Lord was pleased to bind up the bruised reed, so that he seemed to be brought forth pure, as gold seven times refined, and was made a chosen vessel, fit for the great Master's use.

This part of his religious experience, the manner in which he was brought to embrace the principles of Friends, and his answers to some charges which appear to have been urged against him for so doing, are well set forth by himself, in the following

Letter to a Friend.

Since it has pleased the Divine Goodness to endue me with reason, I heartily thank his most excellent Majesty; and that it has been the further product of his good will to give me life and being in that part of the world, where I have had the freedom to use it; especially in the choice of my persuasion, and way of returning my acknowledgments to him. I wish that all who make any pretensions to religion, would make use of this noble faculty with subjection to the divine will, to determine their choice in this grand affair; and not [be tenacious of] the religion of their education [unlest it] be that of their judgment. If people were thus truly wise unto their own salvation, and

did not too lazily resign themselves to the conduct of their guides, thereby regarding more their ease than safety, they would not only be the better able to give a reason of the hope that is in them, but they would shew more warmth in their devotion, more charity in their religion, and more piety in their conversation, than at present they do.

When I was visited some time ago by the chastising hand of the Lord, for sin and my disobedience to his holy will, I laboured under great affliction of mind and anguish of spirit: and though I was constant above many in my attendance on the public prayers of the church, strict in my observance of its ceremonies, and exceedingly frequent in the use of private devotion, yet my burden increased and I waxed worse.

In this wretched and doleful condition I was, when, at a relation's house who had providentially returned from Pennsylvania to his native country, I lighted upon R. Barclay's *Apology for the Quakers;* by reading which I was well persuaded of their principles: and by turning my mind inward to the divine gift, (according to their doctrine) it gave me victory, in a great measure, over our common enemy, banished away my disorderly imaginations, and restored me to my former regularity. I received such comfort and satisfaction to my distressed soul, that thereupon I left the church of England, and joined myself in society with them: and I am the more confirmed in my change, especially where it respects the worship of our Creator, because it is not only the most agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, but Heaven has given us assurance of its approbation thereof; it having been at times, to my own experience, most powerfully attended with the presence of the Most High.

I hope none will grudge me this mercy, because I received it not by their ministry; if they do, I have cause to suspect their charity is not of a christian latitude, since our blessed Redeemer approved not of that narrowness in his disciples in somewhat a like case.

But here, to obviate an objection some may make to my change, because of the distress I lay under, and the discomposure I was subject to at times, I would have it remarked, that I read the said *Apology* beyond my expectation, with more sedateness than usual, and a more quiet composure of mind: so that with the influence of the Almighty, or Providence, or both, I had also the benefit of that distinguishing faculty of man [reason] in the change of my opinion. O that I may never forget the Lord's mercy to my soul! who had compassion on me when I wallowed in my blood, and who said to the dry bones, Live. O that all such as are visited by the chastising hand of their Maker, would seriously lay it to heart, and consider their own welfare and salvation! I could wish with all my heart, that those who labour under this anxiety of mind, would take encouragement to hope in the Lord's mercy through their blessed Redeemer, by his kindness and long forbearance with me. I am a living monument of it now; and I hope I shall be so, while he affords me a being here. If these lines should come to the hands of any that are afflicted and distressed as I was, I have an effectual remedy through mercy, to prescribe unto them: Turn your minds inward to the grace of God in your own hearts—refrain from your own imaginations—be still, and quietly resign yourselves to his holy will; so you shall find health to your souls, refreshment to your spirits, and the sweet consolations of the Lord in your

own bosoms : you shall find your mourning turned to gladness, and your heaviness to joy. This has been my experience of the goodness of the Holy One of Israel, who abhors sin and iniquity, therefore I recommend it to you : and I think this is no mistrusting of the cause, for they are the sick and wounded in spirit, not the whole, that need the Physician.

As for renouncing the covenant, which I and every christian ought to be under, of forsaking the devil and all his works, I am so far from entertaining one thought of neglecting that duty, that I think myself wholly obliged to observe it : and if I should affirm, that through the grace of God, and his assistance, (for otherwise I am satisfied I cannot do it,) the observance of it is possible, I can find no reason why it should be false doctrine in a Quaker more than in a Churchman.

As for deserting that church and ministry which the Son of God came down from heaven to establish, I am not conscious to myself thereof ; for I say, Christ himself is the Head of our church, and by his Spirit and grace, the Ordainer of our ministry.

As to the last query my ingenious acquaintance is pleased to propose, I do let him know that my former despair and forlorn condition has been, since my adhering to that reproached people, changed into a sweet enjoyment of the goodness of God. I could not conceal the Lord's goodness, lest he should withdraw his mercies from me.

I had no secular interest to corrupt me in this change—it is apparent to many, I declined it : but as it was peace with God my Maker, and mercy to my soul I wanted, so having found the pearl of great price among them, I parted with all to purchase it ; or rather, I was restored to all, (I mean the enjoy-

and godly sincerity, were the important ends which he had in view. He could therefore acknowledge with the apostle 1 Cor. ii. 1—5, "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

He was pressing with Friends to be faithful towards God in the various branches of our christian testimony; and especially to keep clear from the anti-christian yoke of tithes; and would often exhort them to be thankful to God for the manifold mercies received and enjoyed, and particularly for the privilege of meeting together without interruption in order to perform divine worship; also to consider what hardships and sufferings our worthy ancestors were exposed to on this account. So good an example of diligence was he in the discharge of this important duty, that the Friends among whom he resided could not remember that he ever missed the attendance of one meeting, except on account of illness.

After he had united in religious fellowship with Friends, he employed himself in the education of youth, and kept a school in their meeting-house at Pontymoil thirty-five years. He instructed his pupils in the useful parts of literature, as Latin, Greek and Geography, with various branches of the Mathematics; but he was chiefly concerned that they might be imbued with the love of virtue, and that by having religious impressions fixed on their tender minds, they might be preserved in innocence. He

conscientiously declined instructing them in the heathen authors, lest they should acquire a disrelish for the principles of true Christianity. It was his general practice to assemble his family and the scholars in the evening, for the purpose of waiting upon the Lord in silence, thus initiating them in serious meditation and retiredness of mind; and as he felt his way open, encouraged them in the performance of their moral and religious duties—particularly this of waiting in silence; laying before them the benefit arising from this practice, as affording facility for seeking after that divine influence which would season their minds with profitable considerations, and strengthen them to draw near to their Heavenly Father, with the prevailing language which proceeds from the heart, when it is awakened to a feeling sense of what it stands in need of.

He officiated as clerk of the Monthly Meeting to which he belonged, during most of the time he lived at Pontymoil, and was very exemplary in the discharge of those duties which devolved upon him connected with the discipline, condescending to the weakest member in charity, good-will, and pure love. His meekness, patience and forbearance towards such as by their unguarded conduct had incurred the censure of the church, were conspicuous; and the mild manner in which he treated them, has reached some and brought them to a sense of their deviations.

In addition to many other services which he rendered to the church, he was frequently engaged with other Friends, in visiting the families of the Monthly Meeting to which he belonged.

His susceptible mind was sorrowfully affected on account of various unseemly and immoral practices which prevailed around him, as "Horse-racing,"

"Cock-fighting," "Common Harvest Shouting," "Profane Swearing," &c., &c.; and he felt it to be his religious duty, from time to time, to manifest his concern for the true welfare of his countrymen, by writing dissuasives from such practices. These papers he was accustomed to submit to the consideration of his friends; and they generally directed them to be printed*

* The following copy of a minute of the Monthly Meeting, under date of Tenth Month 2nd, 1730, is a specimen of these proceedings, and will serve to introduce the narrative to which the latter part of the minute refers—

"Evan Bevan proposed the printing of his Paper against Profane Swearing and Cursing, and taking the Lord's holy name in vain; and it was assented to print [it].

"It is desired that the Paper also which he wrote concerning the affliction and trouble our friend Joseph John fell under, on his dying bed, on the account of his wife paying the tithe for him clandestinely, may be printed."

A short Narrative of our Friend J. John's affliction and trouble on account of his wife's paying the tithe.

Joseph John of Trevthin, in the county of Monmouth, a Friend of sober life and conversation, well reported of in the world, and of good esteem among Friends, held a faithful testimony against anti-christian tithe before his marriage, and although afterwards he paid it not, yet inasmuch as he allowed his wife, through his too great indulgence to her, both to pay it herself and out of his stock to reimburse her relations who privily paid it for her, he fell under great exercise of mind and distress for the same, on his death-bed. He had often spoken to her about it from time to time since their marriage, but towards the latter end of his days, he had quite omitted to do so. When on his death-bed, he spoke to her to this effect: "I am jealous some body or other has paid the tithe, or else they would not leave me alone more than others. The Lord will pass by thee—it was I who was in fault: but I thought to win thee by tenderness: yet now it is a burden to me; dost thou not pity me?" "Yes," said she, "if I could, I would help thee." "O God!" said he, "what shall I do?" Then she and others endeavoured to comfort him. But he said

His friends were affectionately attached to him; and regarded him as a tender nursing father in Israel —an elder and pillar in the church, worthy of double honour—one who exercised the oversight thereof, not as a lord over the heritage, but as an example to the flock. He was a man of very tender conscience, strict over himself, and ready to confess his faults to his brethren.

His conduct corresponded with his doctrine and the principles which he professed: in his conversation he was affable and engaging, instructive and edifying. His surviving friends manifested their estimation of his character and exemplary walk by

again to her, "if thou hadst hearkened unto me formerly"—and she being conscious that she had erred in not doing so, pleaded that she then saw no evil in the payment. "I am a hypocrite," said he, "I should not care if all the world knew it." "O," said some of the standers-by, "you are no such man, you ought not to be cast down." "It is no matter to me," said he, "if all the world spoke well of me, if God rejects me; or if God receives me, if all the world spoke ill of me. I desire the tithe-mongers would return the money that has been paid them, and let them come and take it openly, or distrain my goods according to the course of the law;—but it will be a great matter if they will." His wife was sorely grieved that she had been the occasion of this grief and exercise to her husband; and his brother-in-law who had paid the tithe for her, commiserating his condition, went to the receivers of the tithe to desire them to refund the money. One of them was very compassionate and readily restored his share, adding withal, that he remitted him with all his heart; the others likewise, in pity to his afflicted condition, sent their shares of the money to him. When the afflicted Friend heard of it, he said, "Well, they were kind! tell them I thank them." His wife being very desirous to know the state of his mind, would be asking him now and then, how he was? Once he answered, "I am almost gone through the crowd;" and a few days before his departure, he said, "Well, now I have nothing to do but to return thanks: the Lord works his work without deceit; blessed be his holy name for ever!"

testifying concerning him, "His memory is dear to us; and being dead, he yet speaketh."

Thus having denied himself and taken up the cross to the riches, honours, and preferments of this world, with the pomps and pleasures thereof, he looked forward with patience and humble confidence, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and finished his course in this world in peace the 17th of the Second Month, 1746, aged about 67 years. His remains were interred in Friends' burying-ground at Pontymoil aforesaid, and his funeral was attended by a numerous company of most persuasions and ranks in life.

As all things work wonderfully where obedience is given to the will and requirings of the Lord, so the present case is a special instance of his goodness. His wife is brought under a right sense of her error and wrong-doing, being not only grieved, as aforesaid, for causing that sore exercise to her husband, but also resolved to bear a faithful testimony against that oppressive yoke of tithe for the time to come. And whereas before, she absented herself from meetings for discipline, she now heartily joins her beloved sisters therein, and takes a part with them in those affairs of the church which concern the prosperity of the blessed Truth.

Blessed and praised be the Lord's most holy, most worthy and most excellent name, for his merciful dealings with the sons and daughters of men; and let all the world say, Amen, Amen,

E. B.

4th of the Seventh Month, 1726.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

CONVINCEMENT AND CALL TO THE MINISTRY

OF

MARGARET LUCAS,

WHO DIED AT LEEK, IN STAFFORDSHIRE,

THE 24TH OF THE SIXTH MONTH, 1769.

I WILL BRING THE BLIND BY A WAY THAT THEY KNEW NOT.—ISAIAH XLII. 16.

INTRODUCTION.

The following pages contain the substance of a Letter from the author to a relation: some of her family and several Friends who have seen them, apprehend that they contain much instruction to the christian traveller, who hath "put his hand to the plough." They hold forth encouragement to bow under the earliest impressions of the power of the Most High, to be attentive to the Shepherd's voice, and to suffer all within them to be humbled in submission to his requirings. They show how important it is for those who, like the writer of this narrative, have purchased an inheritance in righteousness, to take heed that they do not let go their hold, but attend to the injunction of the wise man, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." And they are a call on those who have a birthright in our religious society, to prize their privilege; seeing the instance before us is a proof, among many, of the difficulties and trials through which those have to pass, who are called out of the world, to be faithful labourers in the heavenly vineyard.

From the following lively specimen, it is to be regretted that no further documents are to be found of the religious progress of this our dear friend, who lived and died respected and beloved.

THE TESTIMONY

Of the Friends of the Quarterly Meeting of Staffordshire, held by adjournment at Leek, the 3rd of the Fifth Month, 1770.

Margaret Lucas, of Leek, was educated in the national worship; and, being religiously inclined in her youth, she strictly conformed to the external rites and ceremonies thereof; but finding them unavailing to obtain that peace of soul she sought after, was engaged to frequent our meetings; in which she persevered, amidst the opposition and cruel treatment of her relations.

For several years she appeared, at times, [as a minister,] in a few words, to the satisfaction of Friends. Whilst of ability, she was a diligent attender of our meetings; and sometimes under much weakness and infirmity of body; she was also exemplary in observing the time appointed. With becoming composure and resignation of mind, she submitted to the severity of a long and painful disorder; and calmly departed this life the 24th, and was interred in Friends' burying-ground at Leek, the 26th of the Sixth Month, 1769, aged near 68 years.

AN ACCOUNT

OF

THE CONVINCEMENT, &c.

OF

MARGARET LUCAS.*

I WAS born in the year 1701, in Fleet-street, London; my father, whose name was James Brindley, kept a china-shop at the corner of Fetter-lane. I was the youngest of fourteen children: my mother died when I was one year and a half old; after which my father removed to Vauxhall, where he erected a pottery, for making Dutch or stone ware, and married a second wife, who, dying before him, left two children. When I was about seven years old, my father died, leaving six orphans, two of them younger than myself, with no other relation that we knew of, except my aunt, who was my father's sister, and married the person hereafter mentioned as my uncle. My father dying without a will, left things in disorder; and Elias Turner, who was one of the three directors of the South Sea Company, being the greatest creditor, sent for my uncle from Leek to London, and advised him to act as guardian for us. Three of us, at my father's death, were under the care of his housekeeper, the wife of one of his clerks. She was very careful over us, and brought us up strictly in the

* This Account was originally edited by Frederick Smith, the Friend whose "Memoirs," &c. conclude the present volume: two editions of it were published in the year 1797.

Protestant religion. My eldest sister, being weakly, lived much with my aunt in the country, except in the time of her education; and my little brother and sister were taken down to Leek by my aunt, on her return from visiting us, after my father's death; but the little boy did not live long. My uncle had a mind, at this time, to bring me down also, saying that, upon seeing my innocent amusements, he had a particular respect for me; but Elias Turner would not consent to it, and I, with my brother and sister, continued under the care of the housekeeper some years longer. My uncle at times repeating his desire to have us with him, and it being left to my choice, in the year 1713 I came down.

I had conceived the country to be a more delightful place than I at first found it; and I expressed to the maid, that accompanied me, my dissatisfaction and disappointment. She staid with me till the return of the coach, and left me a little sad: yet my uncle and aunt were full of love towards me, and I was careful of my expressions on the difference of situation. But what added to my grief at this juncture was the behaviour of my eldest sister, whom I did not remember to have seen before my coming down: she gave my uncle so much uneasiness, that he sent her out of the town; and, though he strove to prevent it, she married his apprentice, and never was re-admitted to his house while I lived there. On occasion of this, and the irksomeness of my situation, my uncle thought proper to board me at school, though not altogether on account of my learning, for I was then thought dexterous beyond most of my years; and indeed, from a child, there was a flexibility in my temper, which, like the softened wax, seemed fit for impression and improvement. My

uncle concluded that I might meet with something there to improve and divert my mind, though I concealed my sorrow to the best of my power. He took me to governess Hyde's, in order to board me there: but there lived in Smythy Door, Manchester, a widow whose husband died some pounds in my father's debt; and my uncle calling for the money, and telling her whose daughter I was, she said, if he pleased, she would board me, and I might go to a day school. My uncle inquired into her character, and consulted with one Nichols, a yarn merchant, in the Deansgate, who advised him to accept the offer; telling me that his house, if I did not like the other, should be my home; and here I always met with a kind reception.

My uncle staid with me a few days, and then left me with the widow and her daughter, the only child she had. I liked my new situation very well; it was much more agreeable to me than Leek. The widow and her daughter were Presbyterians; but my uncle ordered me my liberty, and that I should go to church; which she never forbade, though she was very strict in her own way of worship, and kept good order in the house, with family prayer night and morning. From these I never absented myself, and I still remember the pleasure I then received from the books I read, the repetition of my catechism, and those forms of prayer adapted to my years; always esteeming those I believed to be religious.

I staid at Manchester till the latter end of the year, and spent the winter agreeably both to my uncle and myself. In the spring he took a journey to London, and as my younger sister had been brought thence while young, he thought fit to take her with him for her improvement; and there she

staid four years. Though I was left at my uncle's as by myself, I did not regret the loss of these two sisters, who were indeed but as strangers to me, and amends were fully made by my uncle bringing down my other sister, with whom I had lived under the care of our housekeeper. This gave me, as it were, new life, for the month that she staid with us; but her departure went very hard with me; and my uncle, who ever sought before I went to meetings, to make me happy, according to his notion, proposed to take me to Manchester again. This pleased me, and the widow received me kindly. She never asked me to go to chapel, yet I many times went at pleasure, and have since found occasion to remember what I met with there. I staid with her till the town was in confusion about tory and whig; and as she was afraid of the consequence, she desired my uncle to take me home.

I was now past thirteen, and quite reconciled to my station, growing in my uncle and aunt's favour, and in love towards them. They punctually fulfilled their promise, that I should want for nothing that was fit for me to have; and though I had learned to dance in London, a dancing-master coming to the town, my uncle sent me to him, it being a diversion which, as I was very agile, it was said I was fit for; and indeed I was very fond of it.

When I was past fourteen, my brother came down to see me; and my uncle, still studying my improvement, sent me to learn writing, to make pastry, and (on the return of the dancing master) to his school again. This gave me an extensive acquaintance; and as I had acquired, from the teachings of my London master, a different air, as it is termed, I generally went off with applause; which was not less pleasing

to my uncle and aunt, than to myself. He often shewed his fondness for me at my return home—taking me to his knee—asking if there was any thing wanting in my dress, which my acquaintance had, and I had a mind to have—saying he would buy it for me; but his love prevented my much asking, for no sooner did he see a new mode than he mentioned it; nor do I remember that I ever asked him for any thing which he denied me.

I was now past fifteen, and there coming two singing masters, who taught to sing psalms by notes, my uncle sent me to them. I went with many more, having great delight therein, as also in the worship of God, as I had been taught.

Here I cannot but observe, how many different inventions there are, to divert the minds of youth from opportunities of seeking after the one thing needful; yet it was in the midst of these hurries that I began to make reflections concerning the clergy, and to account them worthy of double honour; esteeming them most happy, as their employment consisted of devotion to God. I therefore concluded they had a peculiar advantage in the mysteries of divine things, and a more thorough knowledge of the Lord than others; often saying, if I had been a boy I would have been brought up at the University, as my brother was designed by my father to have been.

About this time some persons sought my company, by way of courtship; but I gave them no encouragement, for I kept myself much reserved on that account; going on in an earnest pursuit of my duties, as I had been taught, which proved a comfort to my uncle and aunt.

When about sixteen, my uncle made me an assistant in the family, and on the First-days, I not only read

and gave out the psalms, but also the family prayers, when my uncle was from home, or any way indisposed; so that now I stood high in their favour, with respect both to their religious and temporal enjoyments. Indeed, I have many times since, thought my distressed uncle was similar to Micah, who, we read, thought himself blest when he had consecrated the Levite for his priest; but, alas! how soon did the priest not only leave Micah, but take away his image: so, though I stole not my uncle's god, yet I broke his peace, and left him to contemplate the uncertainty of the delight which is fixed on transient objects.

My uncle now intending my advancement, (as he said,) left his own small, though convenient house, to take a larger, for the better accommodation of me and my many acquaintances; little suspecting that the removal would overthrow his happiness; but so it was. This house stood opposite the gates of the church, (so called,) where I was frequently reminded of the mortality of the body, and was thereby struck with many serious reflections on the state of eternity, and the immortality of the soul.

As I lived so near, I often waited upon the corpse to the grave, musing in myself how it must be with the deceased in the hour of death; for, though I had often heard that sentence pronounced, by the priest, in which it is said, "We commit the body to the ground, (note) in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life;" yet, upon the strictest review, I could not find I had any evidence of that hope abiding in me. And though my reasonings would have led me to conclude it was an immediate gift of God to the soul at the time of departure, and my esteem for the clergy induced the belief, that it was an assurance given to them, and that the

people must build their hope thereon ; yet my uneasiness was not thereby allayed; for that foundation was so shaken, that my faith could not stand thereon, and I was still uneasy. But although it was such a mystery to my natural conceivings, that I could not fathom it ; yet I believed this hope was necessary for a Christian to find, while in health, the better to support his illness, and help him to submit himself to the will of God in his death. My soul was at this time under a weighty pressure ; and although I was then ignorant what it was, I have since believed it was no less than the drawings of the Father's love ; yet as the natural man discerneth not the things that be of God, so he knoweth not where to seek them. Thinking I wanted that zeal which I saw in others, I was now increasingly fervent in my prayers ; I made additions to my private, and waited with attention on my public devotions ; and sometimes went on with vigour in the repetition of those exercises.

About the seventeenth year of my age, there came a bishop to the town, in order for a confirmation, which I thought was a singular good for me ; for from that ceremony I conceived that a steadier hope and faith in Christ would seize upon my soul ; and I entertained thoughts that there was a peculiar power given to this high and holy function, from which I was to reap that which was divine. I doubt not but the Invisible Being looked with compassion on the fervent desire of my soul, and viewed with acceptance the reverential awe in which my mind, as well as my body, was prostrated to receive the earnest of my wish ; and I know that my behaviour, both before, at, and after that time, was taken notice of by my relations and intimates.

A little while after, my uncle asked what I thought

of receiving the sacrament. I told him I did not believe it was proper for so young persons to adventure; for, as it is said, "those who receive it unworthily, procure to themselves damnation," I durst not receive it. He told me of some that were as young as myself, and whom he thought as unfit—I told him I knew it, but they seemed to exalt themselves amongst their companions on account of that, which I durst not, in the greatest humility, partake of; neither did I find, that my faith was sufficiently ripe to comprehend the mystery betwixt the outward bread and wine, and the body and blood of Christ.

Here I began to flag in my hopes of having received any benefit by the laying on of the bishop's hand; and what if I say, I staggered, not only at one thing or two, but at all that I had done on a religious account. Did I now believe there was no God? Oh no! but to my inexpressible grief, I could not find how to worship him, so as to prove my own acceptance, or the assurance that I longed for; nor could my soul rest without it.

I had now laboured in my inventions—spent all my hopes; and as a person quite fatigued, sitting down, I was made to bear such a mortification as I had never before known—to see that I was dwindling away from that, which I thought was most expedient for me to be exercised in, and that my performances were no more than so many fleeting comforts continually wasting in the fruition.

At last I went on so heavily, that I began to be weary of them, and willing to leave the burden I had contracted in my own will. I found enough to do to go on with them in their course, for I found I had gotten them only by tradition. This was a close time, wherein I was far from exaltation of any kind;

for it was to me hard drawing on without faith, which I now concluded was the immediate gift of God. Under this belief I had to cry like the poor publican, "Lord have mercy on me;" and my soul was more justified from these breathings, than it had ever been in all the wearisome labours I had engaged in. But the enemy, who is always near to damp the good in us, troubled me with many of his suggestions, as that it could never be the way to attain to happiness, to discharge myself of the worship due to God for his favours; yet the more I gave way to the thoughts of throwing myself on the mercy of God, the more also I found a hope to spring within my soul, that the Lord would point out a way for me. This drew me still farther from all ceremonies, and gave my mind such a turn from those diversions I once took delight in, that my uncle and aunt took notice of it, and called it melancholy. But it arose from a deep solidity of thought, not knowing in what manner or path I should be directed—how I should recover a proper sense of my afflictions, or obtain a satisfactory assurance. This pensiveness my uncle and aunt used their endeavours to prevent, and asked my acquaintance to visit me oftener; but their company so frequent, suited not my taste: those nights, that were spent in what I had once thought innocent amusements, were now made to procure dull mornings; and my desire of being alone, with the fatigue of so much hurry, put me on thoughts of shunning the occasions. I therefore desired my uncle to let me go out as a waiting-maid; but they would not hear of parting with me.

When I was past eighteen, we heard that S. Taylor, a Friend, was about selling off the goods of her shop, and going to live at Stafford; and I desired my uncle

to buy them for me, thinking that such an employment might abate the perplexities I was in. I was then a stranger to her, and my uncle, who liked this proposal better than the first, being ever ready to please me, sent for her; and in a little time after, agreed that I should have the goods, and be with her at times for my better information of the business and customers. This gave that family and me our first acquaintance, though I had not the least thought at that time that ever I should change my name in respect to religion. Hence, however, many imagined my persuasion arose, of which I shall speak in the proper place. I went at my own convenience, according to our agreement, still keeping my exercise to myself; nor did I remark any thing particular in my new acquaintance, their exercises lying hidden as well as my own.

When the time came that I was to enter the shop, my uncle had so good an opinion of the Quakers, that he left the appraising of the goods entirely to S. Taylor. I continued to board with my uncle, and made it a constant rule to go directly home at night when I had shut the shop, and thus shunned my former associates. The day I spent in business, and part of the night in much thought; the desire of my soul increasing after that revival of hope, which, as my little faith in what is called the service of God, still diminished, I found at times drawing me nearer to a reliance on him, and a patient waiting for what might follow.

I was about nineteen, when we received an account of the death of my sister Lydia, for whom our family went into mourning: and I not only mourned in clothes, but in heart; for I loved her more dearly than any sister I had, and may truly say, her death

added to the weight of my exercise, as well as to my belief, that it was requisite for *me* to know my own election to be sure. And oh! the distress that I now was in, when I looked upon myself and others, to see them posting on with cheerfulness in the respective duties of their religion, and myself not only barren in my desires of it, but so oppressed in the performance, that I could neither assist my uncle, nor myself that way. They who have known the activity of nature, can best judge of my state, when my uncle, who used to shew me so much indulgence, signified his happiness in my good behaviour by saying, he could scarcely go into company, but they were speaking in my commendation. It was, indeed, a thing very pleasing to my kind uncle, who told me a little after, he would have me be prudent; "for," said he, "there are those eyes upon you that you are not aware of:" and I believe he was then, in his own thoughts, near having his ambition concerning me gratified, which was, to see me happily settled in the world. I conclude, that at this time, the parents of my associates had generally a respect for me; for, although I was of a brisk and lively disposition, yet was I, through the goodness of God, preserved from that which was immodest or profane, and kept within the bounds of what is termed innocent behaviour and good breeding. This engaged many, that had daughters, to encourage my company. But how soon did I see a turn! for that which ought to have raised me higher in their esteem, now seemed to prove my overthrow therein. So true it is, that the greater like, once turned, proves the greater dislike. But to go on—I could no longer remain under the cloud of insensibility; for the Day-Spring from on high had visited me, and the veil was so far rent, that I saw

the work of God was in the secret of my heart, and that a spiritual worship must have place there.

I now remembered that I had heard the Quakers recommend people to mind *that* of God in themselves, and to follow the teachings of the Spirit. This I thought looked somewhat suitable to my condition; and my mind seemed pressed to look at their doctrine again. In order to this, as I was not willing to be taken notice of, I went out between the times of service, as though I would walk. This was an exercise that was allowed by the most strict, to take off any drowsiness that might hang on the mind, and unfit it for the support of the evening devotions. Though this was not what I had a real necessity for, being one of good spirits, and before I knew the want of faith in my way of worship, being in my devotions zealous, in my diversions lively, and in my work industrious; yet I took this freedom, because the meeting lay in my way, where I had a mind to inform myself, and as I passed by the gate, would make a stop. If I heard no voice, I soon went off; but if any one was speaking, I usually stepped within the door, the little end being, as I thought, a good shelter from the eyes of those who sat in the body of the meeting. I made these visits as often as I could; and surely I have to say, the Lord was very condescending, and gave me a more clear understanding than ever I had found within myself at the other meetings, and which, from our house being so near, I had opportunities of. My intentions were good in respect to these freedoms, and I used to stay as long as I durst, then take a turn down the next field, and so to my worship again; whereby I proved the effect which the different doctrines had on me, the former answering to the hope of that justification I have

before spoken of, and the latter fruitless and dull. Yet so far did I proceed in repeating these trials, that I plainly saw it was with me like those who are hard to believe the things they would not have to be true; but so closely did the truth and mercy of God follow me, that I found judgment in myself from the Almighty, for persisting in that which gave me not the least satisfaction. Willingly would I have retained this old profession, that I had been brought up in from my childhood, and that was as dear to my natural desires as Ishmael was to Abraham: but I saw it must not remain, and therefore I made a stop, and refused to go to church, so called.

I had signified something of my uneasiness to my sister, who was coming down from London again, and she had told my aunt that I favoured the Quakers, and did not intend to go to church. This greatly incensed her, and she left me, saying, she would fetch out the parson and people to carry me in. But so far had truth wrought with me, that I found I must not only venture *that*, but also struggle against the oppositions which I felt in myself.

The following night was spent in more confusion than common; and the next day my uncle and aunt went to the parson's, and some time after sent for me. He looked on me with surprise, signifying his great mistake in one whom he had thought so religious, and so good an example to others; for I was a constant attender upon those called Saint's days, as well as other times set apart for worship. He asked me how long I had been uneasy—I told him a great while, and could not find any real satisfaction in any thing that I could do—He signified that a perseverance in those duties I had been instructed in, was the only way, and would, no doubt, bring that satisfac-

tion I spoke of. "But," said he, "your uncle is afraid you are going to be a Quaker"—I answered, "I believe not, though I have met with that satisfaction from their preaching, which I never met with elsewhere"—He said, it was no more than a delusion of the grand enemy of our souls; and then set forth how dangerous it was for young persons either to go to hear them, or to read their books; saying theirs were seducing, erroneous principles, and he would have me promise, never to hear them any more.

Many heavy things he said of them, and asked me particularly about the family of the Taylors; these I could justly clear, and said, that neither they nor any other person had ever endeavoured to insinuate their principles, or turn me from one profession to another. He then said, if I would desist from hearing them, and reading their books, I might do well, and through the continuance of my duties, and good company, might overcome my uneasiness. Indeed, he said so much against the persuasion of the Quakers, that my respect for the clergy, together with my indifference to the formalities, as I then termed the customs of the said people, seemed to determine me never to go to hear them again. I said, (and that very truly,) I would never be a Quaker, if I could help it: nor was I one till the desire of my soul for peace could be no other way satisfied; and no one could wrestle more to escape it than I did, as the following account will shew.

Such now were my childish conceivings, that though I had witnessed the work of God to be among them, yet I thought, could I but come to a possession of that which they preached, and which I found a savour of in my heart, it would not matter whether I attended any form of worship or not.

My uncle said, the parson, whose name was Leay, would board me, which he and my aunt thought very well of. I understood his meaning, and thanked him, but said, "that would only give the town reason to believe there had been a difference amongst us, and if they would be easy, I would see what I could do in going to church again." But I well remember, what a heavy trial it was; and I went with so much indifference, that it gave my uncle and aunt great uneasiness, and myself no less.

Not long after, parson Bennet sent for me to the widow Brueton's; he also expressed himself surprised at his being so mistaken in me, saying, had it happened with many others, he should not have wondered half so much. We being more equal and intimate, I could be more free with him; he asked me if I was for being a Quaker—I said, "I do not know, yet I believe not,"—"Why," said he, "they deny the Scriptures!"—I said, "If they do, I promise you I will never own them, but I know they do not."—"Why then," said he, "they wrest them to their own destruction, and they deny baptism."—I said, "They do of water, but they preach a baptism."—"Yes," said he, "and a strange one too; put your finger into that fire, (one being in the room,) and see how you can bear that baptism."—This filled my mind with indignation, and I said, "No, I scorn it; for I believe they no more mean elementary fire, than the baptism of elementary water." I may conclude that at this time neither he nor I knew that mysterious baptism, which my soul has at times since experienced. He went fluently on respecting the principles of the Quakers, setting some of them forth as quite ridiculous, and told me, if I could not believe him, he would lend me some of their own writings.

I thanked him, saying, I was not in a disposition to read the sentiments of any one profession;—and indeed I was not, for even the Scriptures themselves, in which I had been so conversant and taken delight, seemed to me, just then, of little moment; and so great was my separation from all duties, that I found nothing left to trust in, but God alone. But to return,—I said, "I could not judge them by their writings, but was assured they were so far in the right that, as God was a spirit, he must be worshipped in spirit and in truth." He said but little after, only "If you have got a notion of the Spirit, you are past hopes."

The uneasiness of our family was now no longer a secret: my intimates, one after another, would accost me by the name of "flat-cap," and "Friend," or deridingly ask, "Does the Spirit move thee?" with which, and such other mockeries, my natural inclination was much buffeted. The storm began to be more boisterous, both within and without; my acquaintance abroad and my relations at home: but above these, the enemies of my own house, who were always ready, at each difficulty I met with, to turn the balance against my small hope; and by insinuating the necessity of my being cautious, and deliberate in my proceedings, had run me such a length in trying to go on in the way that I was trained in, that the righteous judgments of the Almighty seized my soul again, and in so weighty a manner, as made that heart, which used to spring with joy at the chiming of the bells, now to fear. That soul, which used to approach the consecrated house with reverence, now trembled at the entrance; and those steps, that used to advance towards the pew with pleasure, lost their former activity; and nothing but horror and darkness ensued.

in the room of the once delightful offerings of prayer and praises unto God.

Oh ! surely I have enough to remind myself of here, without particularizing the afflictions, which the anxious desire of my kind uncle and aunt for my eternal welfare, produced. Such I believed it was, and therefore I endeavoured to bear them with submission and resignation, as proceeding from a principle of love. Indeed, I did all in my power to allay their trouble : the loss of their rest and appetite, and the disquiet of their minds, being a cause of real grief to me ; under which, the little comfort that I could find within myself was, that I was not accessary to it, any farther than by studying to find the answer of a good conscience towards God, and an assurance of that which might go with me beyond the grave : but this I could not find, in the present distressed situation of my mind. Notwithstanding, I secretly longed to hear the Quakers once more ; and as my uncle kept a strict eye over me, that I might have no opportunity of gratifying my desire, I must account it a peculiar favour, that about this time, there came a young woman from Newcastle to visit us. She was a stranger to our uneasiness, and my mind being still pressed to hear as above, I took her out, as though for a walk, and when we were near the meeting, asked her if she had a mind to hear the Quakers—she answered me, " Yes ; for," said she, " there is no meeting of that people at our town." I am sure, had she known the least of our family's uneasiness, she might have read my confusion in my looks when I asked her the question, and much more when I entered the door, and heard set forth the disadvantage those lay under, who halted between two opinions. The minister proved, from the apostle's expressions, " that a double-minded

man is unstable in all his ways ;" and proceeding in that doctrine, it renewed my hope and faith, that the Lord would still be gracious to me. I had before known the witness of God that is placed in the heart, spoken to by several Friends; yet this unexpected testimony was so adapted to my present circumstance, and so answerable to the ardent desire of my mind, of being directed to that path which would lead me to the favour of God, that by this, and our non-acquaintance, all prejudice was removed, and a clench given to the nail of my new profession. For though I did not immediately join the society, yet as I could not but assemble with some community, I found it must be with those whose doctrine now reached my soul; with a resolution and good intention, not to persist any longer in a way that I had no faith in; but to submit myself to the will of the Almighty, and to follow *that* which weaned me from a dependence on formal worship.

We returned home; she satisfied with having indulged her curiosity, and I no less with the hand of Providence in this thing; both filled with admiration, she at the whimsies of the Quakers, and I at their doctrine; well resembling the two women at the mill, the one taken with the truth and the other left. *I* could have concealed where we had been, but *she* could not. My uncle was informed of it, yet did not take any notice while she staid; but when she was gone, he engaged himself in liquor, as I have reason to believe he did one night before, in order to give a fuller vent to his passion; otherwise he would hardly have carried it so far above his reason, as to use me as he did; for according to his own words, he had watched occasion to chastise me as a child, yet could find no fault with me, which could give

him sufficient excuse for so doing; but now he thought nothing was so cruel as to suffer me to run on to my ruin, both of body and soul.

About this time I had put by a young man, who, my uncle thought, was likely to make me happy: he had proposed to settle on me a sufficient jointure, and my uncle had offered, out of his own generosity, to advance a hundred pounds in addition to what I had of my own. But here how different were our views—my uncle thought of the advancement of my body, and I was no less anxious for the welfare of my soul; for I could think of no delight but the immediate favour of God; and this I felt I must prepare to suffer for, as I apprehended it stood opposed to their proposals.

My uncle, as I have observed, having drunk much, was violent in his behaviour; though I could well cover all, as to his intentions, one rash expression excepted, which escaped him in the conclusion of that night's disorder; and which I mention, to shew the reason of my departure from them, and to give an idea how it fared with me. He said, "if ever I went to the meeting again, he would bereave me of my life." I stood trembling, yet received the threat in a tender state of mind, and I could perceive he suffered for it the next moment. My life was not much in my notice, neither could I believe my uncle would execute his vow: but Oh! the idea of a separation overwhelmed my mind with sorrow; for I found, at that moment, that I durst not flinch from the truth with which my mind had been impressed, nor could I think of leaving my nearest relations thus.

Many thoughts revolved within me, and many tears flowed, under the consideration of my unhappy circumstance, as I then termed it. The enemy of my

soul here manifested his malice, by suggesting, how unlikely I was to obtain any conquest over either myself or my relations; and that my rash proceedings might bring on a massacre. But my soul has to commemorate the condescension of Divine Goodness, which, in this very low state, inspired me with some encouragement; and a desire prevailed, though I sought it not, to re-establish my little faith, by again hearing the most penetrating word; and I concluded it would be best, to moderate my uncle and aunt's passion, by returning directly back from meeting to my own apartment, which was furnished with a bed and some few necessaries, bought at my entrance upon the shop: I had hopes they would look on my so doing with a favourable eye, and when their hurry was a little over, send for me home.

They did not miss me till I came from that meeting, and they thought fit to let me stay where I was till the next. They then sent a person to see if I was there: but I did not find an engagement in myself to go, either at that time, or for some weeks after; nor was I so much taken with this *new fangle*, as my uncle called it, as to force my inclination in the least degree; for, could I have indulged myself in the persuasion, that one might serve God acceptably, without going to any public worship, I could, with ease, have remained separate from all. This deliberation, however, gave encouragement as well as opportunity, for my old acquaintance to visit me by turns—the younger sort to shew their wit, by railing at what they called the principles of the Quakers—and the more grave, to set forth, according to their notion, the diabolical tenets of that people. As one struck dumb, I had but little to say in reply; only at times, I signified that their doctrine bespoke better

things; but as I had not yet obtained knowledge, by a perusal of their writings, I durst not attempt, nor did I desire, to be busy in making any defence for them. My mind, indeed, had not hitherto inclined to consult either men or books, lest thereby I should be seduced to believe what was not of God; for I plainly saw, that nothing short of what was so, would satisfy my soul. I may say, in thankfulness to that Eternal Power which still preserved me, the arguments used did not abate my travail of soul after the Divine favour: and, though I hope I never was one wise in my own conceit, yet so far did the truth of God in the secret of my soul exalt itself, that I proved its influences to be more wise than all my teachers; who, at best, were but as the hammer to the nail, in fastening in my soul the impressions which I had received.

In this situation my uncle also visited me, and the sternness of his countenance was altered. He kindly signified to me, how hard our separation was to them, and that if I would but bind myself by a promise, that I would never be a Quaker, he would give me a deed of gift, that at his and my aunt's decease I should have all they were worth. I answered him, that if I could make such a promise, I wanted no farther encouragement than the continuance of their love; but Oh! I could not do it. We both sat and wept our passion out. My uncle mentioned my leaving them so abruptly; but instead of inviting me home, he signified he could now take no pleasure in seeing me, without an alteration.

In a little time I found the balm of Eternal Goodness, which healed the wound that my mind had been made to endure on truth's account.

There now came a young man to visit me that had

been a student, and had received orders with a benefice—not one of the most thoughtful, as will appear. After he had used the compliment of, Madam, how do you do? and I had thanked him, he said, "Why I hear you are turning a Quaker."—I answered, "We sometimes hear that which is not altogether true; but I suppose what you have to say"—"Why then," said he, "there must be a great change in you; and a deal of sobbing and sighing, and *thouing* and *theeing*."—"And pray," said I, "what have you against that language?"—"Why," said he, "it is not within the line of morality, or common civility; but what is used betwixt men and their beasts, and more fit to be used to brutes than men."—I replied, "I am very sorry you should think I have already forgotten myself; but I remember, and know, it is that language which we, in all our prayers, and in the Litany, put up our petitions in; therefore, take heed what you say, for, by your saying it is fit to be used only to brutes and beasts, of what do you make your God?"—"O," says he, "I perceive you side with the Quakers."—"Yes, so far," said I, as to believe *that* language good enough for man, which is used in honouring God."

He went off; nor was it long before my uncle paid me a second visit. As I now seemed to him at a stand, dubious with whom to join, he laid before me the profession of the Presbyterians, saying, he would freely give me leave to join with them. But from the acquaintance I had with that people, whilst twice at Manchester, I knew they dwelt much upon the same things I was in the practice of before; therefore I was not likely to find with them the satisfaction I was in pursuit of. My uncle further proposed, to take the shop and bear the loss he might sustain in

selling off the goods, if I would choose a place agreeable to board at, in any other town; for he thought the removing me out of the way of shame and disgrace, (as he called it,) might be a means of altering my resolution. But the idea I had conceived of spiritual worship, was so fixed in my mind, that it seemed to me, that I must have carried it with me, had I been removed to the uttermost corner of the earth. I signified this to him; and he, much wondering at my foolishness, left me saying, I was certainly bewitched. Indeed, I myself could not, at times, but wonder what it was that bore up my soul against the many hard things I met with from others, and the secret temptations that were daily presented to my own mind; which so filled it, that, in the little sleep I got, I frequently dreamed of something relative to my exercises.

In one of my dreams, a man appeared, coming up to my door with a sieve in his hand, and a bag. He sat down, and opening the bag, put out some wheat into the sieve. I asked him what he was going to do; he said, "to separate the chaff from the wheat." Here the enemy shot his empoisoned dart against that fear which lodged in me, and, through his insinuations, made me believe myself the chaff, blown from my former quietness, by aspiring after the knowledge of things too high for me. Oh! the consternation that my soul was in, from these assaults of the enemy, who now brought up the miscarriages of my life, and my foolish actions, as so many witnesses against me; whilst I endeavoured to withstand him by repentance, and purposes of amendment; pleading with myself the just ground of my present proceeding. But as I had not the evidence of hope at my own command, I was obliged to suffer, till I was again revived by

the mercies of a God, who would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.

In this interval, my uncle came again with parson Leay, and still with hopes, from my staying at home, that they might gain me; but they found their mistake: for, though I said but little, I was as resolute to prove the truth as ever. We sat down, and the parson offered to take in writing, any scruples I had to make; promising either to answer them himself, or to get them answered by the bishop. I acknowledged his kindness, saying, I did not see how any one could be serviceable to me, for it was faith I wanted in the whole. He signified, it was not for the unlearned to pry into the matter of faith, but to believe according to the canons of the church; and went on largely in commendation of the wisdom and great care there had been amongst the learned fathers, that there might be no default or error in the articles of our faith; thence inferring, that it was requisite we should believe them. I signified that I could not place my trust in *man*, but had received a better faith already; and that I believe I ought to seek God for myself. He said, "You are obstinate, and if you do not take care, you will renounce your vow of baptism."—I answered, "I do not find *that* troubles me; for I hold it as a matter of indifference, which will do me neither good nor hurt."—He said, "You are hardened; and if you persist, you will be damned." This struck us silent; and as soon as I could take my looks off him, I cast them on my dear uncle, whose eyes plainly bespoke his grief. The parson got up, and said, "You have need of the prayers of the congregation."—I said, "I know I have need of the prayers of all good people, and desire to have them." As they passed

the shop, I heard him say something of my being quite lost, and my uncle shook his head, and left me in great sorrow.

This was a heavy trial to me, for the enemy aimed his dart again to give a fatal blow, by insinuating into my mind the doctrine of election and reprobation; which strengthened those doubtings the late conversation had raised. What had I here to do? no person in the world to flee to, with whom I could entrust my soul! no book to try my cause by! the Bible itself being still to me as if written in an unknown tongue! no God or Saviour at hand, nor even any comfortable desire that I was sensible of! Read, in these expressions, the deep afflictions of my soul, thus lying under the tramplings of a most desperate fiend! Could I have found just reason for his upbraiding me with lightness, it would at this time have certainly appeared; or could I have believed that God was unjust, and would inflict eternal punishment on the innocent, or on a repentant sinner that was willing to turn from every evil way—I say, could I have reconciled this to his attributes of mercy and goodness, I must assuredly have fallen by these suggestions of the cruel deceiver, who now appeared to me in the most surprising manner; producing that exercise, which, to this present time, gives me astonishment. For, one night, as I lay in bed, on a sudden, a voice, as I thought, audible and like my own, cursed the Lord, and defied Heaven; saying, "Now am I damned, for I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and shall never be forgiven." When the words were passed, I felt bewildered, and immediately flung myself upon my face, crying out, "O Lord! forgive me; but it is not I, yet, O Lord!

forgive me." Thus, in confusion I went on, sometimes begging for forgiveness, and then denying the fact: and when I did so far recover, as to know how I was, I felt, from the agony, in a complete perspiration; the bed whereon I lay, for some time after, shook with my strong trembling; and it was a considerable time ere I could compose myself. Yet when I could, I found that my great God did not accuse me; but encouraged the sincerity of my desire to look up to him, as God, who mercifully saveth those that trust in his providence; and is willing to remit the past transgressions of the truly penitent. And here I proved my hope renewed, and my faith established; yet, even here I stumbled at the honour I had been taught to give to those divine oracles, as I esteemed the clergy; and thought I must surely be mistaken, in supposing there was no more in them than in other men; nor yet could I lower my high esteem of their learning, and set the illiterate, (as I had been taught to call them,) on an equal footing of wisdom, with those having the high title of reverend. Yet here did my God help me; for one evening as I sat, low in mind, musing alone, the everlasting Truth seized upon me, in an exposition of that remarkable thanksgiving of our Saviour, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." This immediate favour, from the loving kindness of the Lord, had a great influence over me; I arose from my chair, and fell upon my knees to receive the overshadowings of his power; and such was the effect, that by its assistance, I ejaculated from my soul, a few words in supplication to the Lord, begging a

farther manifestation of his will, and his preservation therein. This, I apprehend, was the most lively prayer I had ever then made.

When I had waited for a time on my knees, I remembered that I had read the passage, yet desired to look at it again. I had no Bible of my own, my aunt having taken mine from me, telling me I should have no use for it, as indeed I had not much till this time; yet, being provided with one, I looked for the text, and casting my eye upon it, found a great alteration in myself, and cause to say, "surely the Lamb of God is found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof." From this time I knew it was not in my power to read the Scriptures in their right signification, but only as I had the key of interpretation lent me, which I now often received, to my great profit and consolation. Thus I became again familiar with my book, and prized that good companion more justly than I had ever done before; desiring to be kept in the way I was to go; to have bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and to be enabled to return to my Father's house in peace; concluding that the Lord should be my God.

Whilst I resigned myself to his holy will, it pleased the Almighty to shew me, that it was not right that I should thus believe, and yet live alone, without assembling myself with those that I was satisfied were believers in the same Divine Principle: neither do I now think it would have been good or right; for, as sure as the Lord thought proper, in his wisdom, to provide helpmates for the body, so surely does he condescend to qualify many of his faithful servants, to be helpful, in a spiritual sense, to each other. I therefore believed it was right for me to attend meetings, in order to retain my favour with him.

In this my aunt did not interrupt me till I had been a few times; notwithstanding which, I had enough to do within myself; the tears I shed at my entrance at the door, and on presenting myself before the Invisible Being, were so many renunciations of my own will. I used to sit down on the first seat I came to; yet so well did it answer, that what I sowed in tears at my getting there, I reaped with joy at my coming away.

Going with a soul desirous of improvement, I was often highly favoured, and had to remember S. Radford's recommendation to me, to "buy the truth and sell it not;" as also to be assured of the justice of the Almighty, and that man's destruction is of himself. I think it was about, or a little after this time, that I heard my present uncle, Joshua Toft,* give

* Joshua Toft joined the Society of Friends by convincement in the early part of his life, and through obedience to the teaching of Divine grace, became whilst young, a good example of religion and virtue. His concerns in business at that time, occasioned him to be much from home and in company with such as were unacquainted with that circumspect demeanour which his religious profession required; from some of whom, in consequence of his consistent conduct, he met with ill-treatment. But his mind was so clothed with patience, meekness, and love, that he was enabled to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and sometimes their enmity against him for his faithfulness, gave place to respect and friendship. He began business in a small way; but the blessing of Divine Providence crowned his honest endeavours, and whilst yet in the full vigour of life, he acquired a moderate competency. Thus circumstanced, and with a flow of business which would have enabled him to accumulate much wealth, with noble fortitude he declined trade, in order to devote himself more fully to the service of his great Lord and Master. He came forth as a minister when about thirty-two years of age, and laboured faithfully in that character for many years in various parts of England and Ireland. For about twenty years before his decease he was much disabled from travelling, by a disorder in his head, which at times affected

his testimony to the truth; and I remember it was as one having authority, pressing Friends to come out of Babylon, and exhorting them not to partake with her of her sins, lest they should also be partakers of her plagues; and though I was very young in the truth, yet the Lord was pleased so to enlighten my understanding, that I read him spiritually, and was made a partaker of that life from which the power came. Nor do I forget the encouragement which I received from another Friend, when, like a shower of the former and latter rain, he watered the plantation of the Lord, by setting forth the blessedness with which he will reward those who forsake all for his name's sake, &c. But, though I could take delight, yet I was not to build a tabernacle here; my troubles were not quite over; for, though my aunt let me go free a few times, yet she proposed to perplex me in my new design, by aggravating the passions she found in herself, and by giving way to the foolish excitations of others.

The first time she met me in my going to meeting, was with a whip, and the next with a black hood and

his understanding, and which deprived him of sight for more than fourteen of the last years of his life. After this privation, his mental faculties resumed their former strength, and continued clear till his decease.

He bore great bodily suffering as well as the loss of sight, with exemplary patience, resignation, and cheerfulness, expressing his belief that all his affliction was laid upon him in love, and his hope that he should receive it as so dispensed.

A short time before his departure he was much comforted by a secret intimation in these words, "I have been with thee, I am with thee, and will be with thee."

He quietly departed this life the 15th of the Eighth Month, 1769, aged upwards of eighty years, and was interred in Friends' burial ground at Leek.—*(From the Testimony of Staffordshire Quarterly Meeting.)*

green apron. But I shall endeavour here to be as brief as I can; for I do not desire to remember the foolish pains she took to mortify me: yet I feel engaged, gratefully to acknowledge, that I was preserved above all the ridicule I met with; though, to many I was a subject of entertainment and diversion. Some, however, seemed to have compassion for me; though I cannot say that of such, I knew at that time above three or four. Among these was one that frequently expressed a concern for my preservation, and offered to assist me in having my aunt bound over to her good behaviour; but I felt more desirous to be preserved in a proper decorum towards her.

Others of my well-wishers advised me to leave the town; proffering me a room in their house, and liberty to sell my goods with them. This, I must ever acknowledge, was a kind part; but, though they pressed my compliance, I could not find an inclination thereto; for I conceived, that to quit the town would look as though I had done some bad thing; and I knew no one could, justly, say any worse thing of me, than that I was a Quaker. Therefore, though I could willingly have been out of the noise that my change had occasioned, yet I rather chose to commit myself to that Hand, which I now believed could preserve me, and submit to the confusion of this time, till my God should say, it is enough; not doubting that these things were permitted for the trial of my faith. Yet, so far did their kindness prevail, that I inclined to ask farther advice upon it; and, as S. Leay had been a few times to ask me how I did, I told him my desire, and requested him to procure me an opportunity of speaking with one of the Friends Toft. He asked me, which? I said, either of the three brothers, that I could most conveniently go to, with-

out my uncle or aunt's knowing it; for I was much more troubled at their abuse of others, than of myself. He told me the next day, that he had spoken to Samuel Toft, who was willing to give me the hearing that night.

Accordingly I went in the dusk of the evening, Nicodemus like; not so much for the shame of the thing, (which I was now used to,) as for fear that my aunt should get knowledge of it. I did not know, by the name of Samuel, which was to receive me; but, knocking at the door, he let me in. Having paid my compliments, I sat down; and introduced our discourse, by saying, I supposed he was no stranger to the hurry of the town, and the angry mood of my uncle and aunt concerning me. I signified that I could not help it, but that, notwithstanding this, I found myself engaged to join the society: I farther told him of the kind proffer made me, but doubting in my mind what would be for the best, I had a desire to ask advice. He told me, that to go was the most likely way to rid myself of those troubles; but asked if I had no hopes of my relations being better humoured. I told him, no; but was rather afraid they would be worse, for they said they could never rest while I was a Quaker. He then said, "It is a nice point to give advice in, for who can tell what thy relations may do in their anger, or how thou thyself canst bear it; perhaps the surest way to be quiet from them is, to accept the proposals of thy friends."

This, however, was not what I expected, nor indeed, what I desired; and, to bring him more over to my views, I said, "Do you think, Sir, there is room to believe I should be presumptuous, if I should stay, and receive an injury from them?" He said, he thought not, so long as I gave them no just

occasion; and added, "Young woman, what dost thou think is best thyself?"—I answered, "I would not, willingly, run myself into danger, neither act any way purposely to provoke them; nor yet do I see how I can, at this time, fly from their anger, and leave the town, without giving myself secret uneasiness."—To this he replied, "To be sure, we ought to mind *that;* for we might go out of one trouble into another, and perhaps a worse." He further asked me, how I thought I could bear the trial; saying, I had already known something of an exercise of this kind.—I said, "Yes, I have; and, the truth I have found so much on my side, that I have been hitherto supported through it, and now do not doubt, but if I should lose my life, in the way of my relations' anger, my soul would still be happy."—He signified, if such was my belief and resolution, he could say nothing better to me than, Go on and prosper.

Wishing him the compliment of the night, I returned, desiring to remain stedfast to what I apprehended was my duty; but when at home, I could not forbear reflecting on the small assurance I had given this Friend; and especially on the odd appearance, for a Quaker, which I had made; for, besides my speech, I went in full trim. I had on my hoop, rings on my fingers, and ear-rings in my ears; my clothes, indeed, were black and white crape mourning, which I wore for my beloved sister, and therefore my linen was without lace; neither was I thoughtful, at this time, about my outward dress, my work lay more within. Nor did my friend regard my appearance so much, as to overlook the intentions of my heart; for Samuel Leay told me the next time he saw me, that S. Toft said, he was satisfied there was

that within me, that would prevail on me to lay my compliments aside; and it was not long ere I found it my place to do so. I must now mention a probable reason, why I was not allowed to give my friend a fuller assurance; and which may also shew, how blind I was to my own state, and how much need I had to crave Divine light to steer my course by; for, though I seemed to myself to be quite fixed in my purpose, yet I soon found, by experience, how weak I was.

I received a letter from my dear brother, (who had kindly paid us a visit on the death of my sister,) saying that he had heard from my uncle, the melancholy affair that was amongst us; describing the fanatical and fantastical deportment of those I was about to join with; the utter mistake they lay under, in respect to the doctrines of Christ, and giving me a kind invitation to come to him, with a promise to take care of me and my fortune. He affectionately mentioned an opportunity he had of placing me with a near relation of his wife's, who was a milliner in the city, if I liked that business; and concluded in much brotherly love, and with desires for my welfare every way.

This so sensibly touched the natural affection I had for him, that, had I not been favoured from the Most High, with a sight of the snare which my enemy had laid for me, I should certainly have accepted this offer from my only brother; the consideration of whose love, in this instance, and of the grief I had given my other near and dear relations, caused me to turn my exercises round and round again; and to consider the cause of them. In this affecting survey, many were my secret supplications to the Lord, for his preservation and assistance, that thereby the enemy might be

defeated in all his stratagems. Thus was I attacked on my weakest side; for this tender treatment from my brother, and my uncle's three last visits, gave me more affectionate concern than all their abuses. But now I was to answer the letter, and I did it so thoroughly, according to that wisdom, which my Heavenly Father was pleased to favour me with, that I never heard any more from my brother on that subject; but whenever afterwards he wrote to me, it was in great love and respect.

Through the condescensions of the inexpressible love of my God, I had surmounted many difficulties and doubtings in my own mind; yet had I divers trials still to wade through, as now will appear.

The alteration of my speech was in this manner:—one morning, as I lay in bed, a weighty exercise came closely over my mind; and as I waited to know the cause, it came before my view, that I must use the plain language. I had, before, had this at times under my notice, and now had hardly time to reconsider the thing and prove it was the truth, ere my aunt knocked. I knew her step, which made me tremble, and therefore I made no great haste to dress; but as I knew I must submit, I went towards the door, saying, Who is there? What dost thou want? She said, Let me in and I will tell thee. I did not in the least question that; and she quickly let me know it, by many threatenings of what she would do, if ever I *thou'd* her again. I could not but think it was a very hard allotment to me, that I must begin this required alteration with my aunt; yet, from the satisfaction which I felt in my own mind, I was encouraged in the truth; and from that time I did not shrink from that part of my testimony, except to my aunt, whom I in no way de-

lighted to vex, and therefore, as much as possible, I evaded the singular language; and yet, rather than use the plural, would many times break the thread of our discourse; till I plainly saw it would not do, and that I must either break my peace, or commit myself to my aunt's fury. This I soon experienced; for using the word thee to her, it so inflamed her, that, as there stood a fire-shovel in her way, she took it up and struck at me. My sister being in the little room, caught hold of it, or she would probably have done as she had threatened, for the room or closet behind the shop was so narrow, that I had no room to draw back. Thus was I once more preserved; but had reason to fear I should yet be the cause of bringing my aunt to much disgrace, as she often declared, that she believed it was no more sin to kill me, than a dog.

I found she had heard of my being advised to leave the town; and I believe, I suffered much for that kindness of my friends. My aunt's hopes seemed now, that either they would draw me, or she should drive me out of the town, for she said that, if I would be a Quaker, I should not be one in her sight. And now I had the former kind proffer renewed—P. Meller sending me an invitation to come to Whitehaugh, for a quarter of a year, till my aunt should be better reconciled. This was indeed a kind invitation from one that I had never spoken to; and I might have gone, for any business or school that I then had; for my aunt's behaviour had so frightened the scholars, that their parents thought fit to keep them at home; and had it not been for the sake of seeing one called a Quaker, I should hardly have sold so many trifles as I did; but there seemed a general curiosity to see me.

Standing, thus, as an object of disdain and derision, I could willingly have accepted the kind invitation of my friends; yet, when I cast my eye toward the Captain of my salvation, I found I had not liberty to move; and therefore, with an acknowledgment of their kindness, I passed it by.

Another proof of my aunt's unguarded passion soon after occurred, which was this:—we were sitting together in the little room, as we very often did, and it was drawing towards the middle of the night; when, in the course of our conversation, she obliged me to use that language which she could not bear, and a brass candlestick standing betwixt us, she flung it at me with such force, that it struck against the wall: I had just time to see her intention, and by stooping escaped the blow. Thus did David's God again preserve me, for the sake of the stem of Jesse, that now began to bud within my heart: and although I stood here in jeopardy of body, yet I was mercifully preserved in stability of soul, and in a supporting belief of being in the way of my duty; and was favoured with hope as an anchor in this assurance, that if it pleased the Lord to permit the death of the mortal part, he would also be pleased to let his mercy light on my immortal soul, and I should die as a martyr to my faith in Christ. Yet, a fear for my aunt prevailed over me; and though I had concealed her behaviour towards me as much as possible, yet this I durst not conceal, lest I should be chargeable with the consequence. I therefore desired my sister to tell my uncle of this violent action, and my fears. He returned for answer, that whatever treatment I met with, was good enough for me; and as to my aunt, it was impossible to keep her at home.

The grief that I passed under, for fear of my aunt's

going quite distracted, was great, and the bowings-down of soul and body were frequent, with earnest supplication to the Almighty for the preservation of us both—she in her senses, and me in the way of my duty towards him, and in a justifiable behaviour to my uncle and aunt. I believe my uncle had, at that time, more compassion for me than he would suffer to be seen: he had my aunt talked to, and would not suffer her to come at such unseasonable hours again; for she had several times before spent most of the night with me alone; and what I then received from her, the Almighty knows, and indeed, did make up to me in her reconciliation afterwards. Her nightly visits here ended; but they had been so long continued, late and early, that I had habituated myself to spend the nights in the little closet, where I used to keep a fire. I sat much there, and when it was bed-time, if my aunt was absent, would put out my candle and sit as still as I could, lest I should be suspected of keeping disorderly hours.

I had here no intimate to converse with, or encourage me, and was left as a person quite alone; but the immediate visitations of divine favour, at times, did most graciously establish my faith; and when almost overwhelmed, the Lord would, in the condescendings of his compassion, direct my mind to some passage in the Scriptures for my consolation; and I seldom read, or contemplated on them without tears. Yet how quickly did I lose the sight and effect of these favours; whilst, like a traveller, driven away from the haven of his happiness by contrary winds, I was forced by grief into a confusion of thoughts, having frequently sat under the violent suggestions of the enemy till two, three, four, or five o'clock in the morning; and was sometimes no sooner in bed, than

my aunt would call me up. It is hardly credible how little sleep I went with: but surely, I sympathized with my uncle and aunt in the affliction I gave them. Meat was to me as trifling as sleep, whereby I proved on what a little nature will subsist: my meals were no ways constant; a bit of bread and cheese with a little water or milk, or bread and butter with a dish of tea, were my only food for months; nor did I desire any thing else, till necessity obliged me to alter my course.

My aunt, though under some restraint, used to tell me, she would make me suffer yet; saying, no one had any business with what she did to me. One market-day, she followed me as I went behind the counter, and kept me there for some hours; saying, she would hear my language to-day; and though I desired her to let me go, yet she would not; nor did I choose to put her away. I was, indeed, under exercise, and desirous to do my duty in the sight of the Divine Being, though apprehensive I must suffer for it. When any came into the shop, she told them, I was the new-made Quaker; and filled those who were strangers to her, with admiration of us both; and I may say, I blushed as much for her as for myself. Each time she thus exposed me, she held me by the left arm, which was next her; and when I used the plain language, she pinched me very badly; and so often renewed her pinches, that it was very hard for me to bear them. Yet I saw no way to avoid her ill usage, without using her as I never had done, and bringing guilt on myself; I therefore endeavoured to hold out a little longer; and have since wondered how I bore it without complaining. She had, indeed, inured me to suffer; and, would often say, the Quakers had taught me; and if she smote

me on one cheek, I must turn the other. She tried me so much on this occasion, that I many times desired her to forbear; yet had no hopes that she would regard my petition: but as my arm and hand were very visibly swelled, I wished them to plead for me; and, by often looking at them, brought them under her notice; when she tauntingly said, "I doubt I have hurt thy arm;" and in a little time went away. When she was gone, I tried to unbutton my sleeve, but my arm being so very much swollen, I could not.

Doctor Gravesnor's daughter, knowing my aunt had been with me a long time, and seeing her go out, stepped in, and helped me to unbutton my sleeve; and seeing the condition I was in, went for her father. When my wristband was loose, my hand and arm swelled to such a degree, that, before the Doctor came, I could scarcely shut my fingers. When he saw my arm, he said it was a very bad bruise; it seemed, for the space of the palm of the hand, to be like a jelly, and exceedingly black toward the shoulder. The Doctor seemed surprised, and said, he was afraid it would mortify; then went home, and quickly returned with a medicine. He was one who had always shown me great respect; and his daughters were my scholars, till my aunt thought proper to break up the school. I believe it was both from his respect and fear, that he took the freedom, after he had dressed my arm, to scold and blame me for my foolish, childish sufferance; saying, my case was dangerous, and I might lose my arm, if not my life; yet he added, that he would do all in his power to prevent it. I told him, I was satisfied with his kindness and judgment; and I was more willing, at that time, to give up my life than my arm: yet I struggled

in the secret of my mind to submit to the will of God; and the Doctor, seeing my tears fall, said, "Nay, indeed, you have enough to bear, without being chid;" and so I found; for, besides my inward exercise, his application was very sharp. He often said he was afraid of the bone; and that it was such a piece of cruelty, as none in their senses could be guilty of. He staid with me a good while, repeating the dressings often, which renewed the pain. My fingers were swollen, stiff, and useless, for I could neither close nor move them. The Doctor asked me, who I had to be with me, since I left my uncle's; adding, that now I could not do without assistance; and charging his daughter not to leave me, till I had got somebody. When he left me, he directly sent for my uncle, and told him in how unchristian-like a manner my aunt had used me; adding, she was more fit to be bound, than to go loose; and that he ought not to suffer her to come to me. My uncle promised she should not: yet this did not move his pity, to induce him to come and see me, which was what I greatly desired.

It was a month before I could turn my arm behind me, to dress myself. My sister had been sent to school at Manchester, for fear, as I have thought, of her catching the infection of a Quaker; nor did I much repine at the loss of her company, for I found that she had acted treacherously betwixt us. But few in this illness came to see me; yet I heard that many were displeased at my aunt. Among those few that came, my present aunt, S. Whitehead, was one; and her visit was very acceptable, though I had then no acquaintance with her. She spoke to my encouragement, and invited me, when I was better, to come to see her; which I could willingly have done, but

thought proper to delay it some time, for fear my aunt should know it, who spared no one that she heard spoke to me in a friendly way.

S. Taylor, at this time, lived with John Winter, at Stafford ; and, seeing my uncle and aunt's groundless dislike to that family, I had desired they would not visit me often. They saw my motive, excused the freedom I took with them, and when I went to them, behaved to me in a loving and free manner.

Here I ought not, and hope I never shall, forget the best of visitors, the Invisible Comforter ; who, in a good degree, made my afflictions easy, and consoled my spirit, under a belief that I was persevering in the way of my duty.

From the encouragement that I thus felt within, I was excited, as soon as proper, to endeavour to go to meeting again ; and when I had so far recovered as to dress myself, I thought, from my weakly state, it would be better for me to board in a family, that I might be in the way of getting such provision as my constitution required ; which had never been very strong, and was now much impaired by excess of trouble, and my different course of living. As there was a door from my apartment into the other part of the house, I thought it convenient to board with Thomas Turnock, who lived there ; and I was well satisfied to do so.

I had now some hope, from my aunt's absence during the last month, that she would no more interrupt me in going to meeting : but soon found it frustrated, whether by accident or information, I know not. For, one day, when I came to the corner, near my uncle's house, I saw her coming towards me. The thoughts of the Doctor and my arm quickly occurred ; and I concluded, should I suffer it to be hurt again,

the consequences would be very bad. As I was at liberty, it seemed right to keep so, and make the best of my way; yet so embarrassed was I, that, before I had gone many yards, I faltered in my purpose, and my aunt got up with me, before I was half way to the meeting. I now saw my mistake, and that it would have been better if my aunt had overtaken me sooner; for the place looked dangerous, and the want of room to shake and push me about, gave me many apprehensions that she would throw me headlong down the precipice. It was about the time that Friends were going into the meeting, and this vexed her the more; for I have reason to believe she could not endure the sight of a Friend, on my account. She did not spare to tell me of hurting my arm, nor to shake me by it; but as it had some folds of flannels around, it was preserved. My endeavour to outwalk her was not suddenly forgotten; she, many times after, made mention of it, and would signify that God was above the wicked spirit still.

Thus, with many admonitions and exhortations, as she called them, she kept me till the time when she might expect the meeting to break up, and then left me.

Being at liberty, I went towards the meeting, and, as it was not over, I stepped within, that my aunt might know that my intention was resolute. This seemed to be a renewal of our acquaintance, for she soon repeated her visits, though not at the former unseasonable hours.

I have, many times, seriously reflected how it was with me in these straits, and may acknowledge that my composure was owing to a divine power, which staid my mind on God, and kept down those passions of nature, which otherwise might have exceeded

their bounds. But, Oh! the calmness and tranquillity that did in these times of trial possess my heart, whilst innocency prevailed over shame: and I found, by submission to these lessons of mortification, that I grew in patience and resignation—in the desire after the Lord's favour, and the manifestation of his will, for he brought my heart into so good a degree of submission, that I was willing to undergo, or be termed anything, rather than lose the enjoyment of *that* in which I had now a small possession.

It was about this time that I knew an ecstacy of joy, at the freely giving up my name to *that*, which I once thought the most despicable. There came a London haberdasher to my shop, with whom I dealt in business: he approached me in his customary manner; and as I did not answer his compliment, as usual, he looked full at me, and said, "Are you a Quaker?" My soul was struck with this home question; I solemnly answered, "Yes;" and immediately a spring of joy seized my heart, accompanied with this desire, Not only a Quaker, Lord; but grant me to be an Israelite indeed.

From this time my good desires were strengthened, and the ambition of being an Israelite, became my exercise. But here I cannot but remark, how like a fool I appeared in my own eyes; for there seemed as great an alteration in me as could possibly happen from such a change. I could not now be fluent in compliments, and saw it best to keep out of extravagance of words, and such a latitude in discourse as I formerly indulged in. So many cross words and knotty queries lay in the way of all I seemed to have to do, that nature was abashed, almost beyond the hope of recovery; yet I often contemplated the benefit that accrued to Zaccheus from that heavenly call,

"Make haste, and come down:" and how willingly would I have made my situation similar to his; believing there was something in that call alluding to the glories of eternity; which now appeared of brighter lustre to my eye, than all the glittering objects of a transitory life. Surely the time would glide sweetly on, in reciting those refreshing prospects which attended my intervals of grief; but the sequel of my history calls on me to cross my inclination.

It was about this time that John Toft gave me an expectation of a visit; but that evening I was threatened with a disappointment; for, my aunt came in high displeasure, and by her upbraidings raised a crowd about the door, which occasioned him to pass by. When she had wrought herself into a disposition to be more quiet, she shut the door and sat down. I turned out of my mind the thoughts of her unkind behaviour, yet could not help feeling regret at the loss of the Friend's company, being desirous to see him, as he had been instrumental for my good. Whilst I was musing on these things, a messenger came and told me, that although my aunt was there, if I thought it convenient, he would come to see me. I hesitated a little, to prove what would be best; knowing my aunt's weakness, that she would not spare me, nor mind, in her passion, what she expressed; yet hoping, as it was his desire to come, that he would excuse what might fall upon himself, and see through the falsities she might cast on me.

With this conclusion I requested his company; and my aunt being present, said she would stay to see this Friend. On his knocking, I let him in, with a degree of fear, and watched to hear the salutation she gave him; which was:—"Thou deceiver! thou antichrist! thou hast seduced this silly wretch."

Had she known what my heart could have told her, she might have thought differently; for on the appearance of the Friend, I was made very sensible of that power by which I had been drawn into the truth.

He endeavoured to shew her the unreasonableness of her charge, by assuring her, he had never had any conversation with me, nor had visited me before. She answered, "If thou hast not, thy brethren have;" and proceeded with violence against the Quakers. He still tried to engage her attention, by reminding her that his mother and she used, as neighbours, to be acquainted: she signified that was true, and if ever there was a good Quaker in the world, his mother was one.

She walked to and fro between the shop and the closet, laying many heavy things to my charge, which I had learned with silence to bear, till she touched my modesty, and told the Friend the freedom which, she said, I gave to young men; when I desired her to keep to the truth. She said, "If I spoke another word, she would knock my head against the wall;" which, I well knew, a word or two more would have aggravated her to do. Upon his asking, "How long I had been so bad," she said, "ever since I had been deluded; for I was well enough before I was bewitched."

Thus she went on, as long, I believe, as she had power; for, going out, she said, "I will go, but I will come again." But she came no more till next day, when she laid on me with blows, saying that I sent for the Friend on purpose to vex her. She had shewed so much of her passion, as to make the Friend remark to me, that he could think no other than that she was out of her senses; and that he could not see,

if I had not truth for my foundation, how it was possible for me to stand. I told him that I had no other view of coming amongst Friends, than to procure the truth and peace of God unto my soul; and that I had still hopes I should be preserved. He observed to me the emptiness of a barren profession; and advised me to wait on God in the secret of my heart, to rely on his wisdom, and to trust in his power, expressing a desire that I might be preserved; and adding, he would have come to see me sooner, but found himself engaged to take the apostle's advice, to "lay hands suddenly on no one;" and, after kindly inviting me to his house, took leave. This visit I returned in about a month.

When he was gone, I considered what had passed, and was thankful to the Great Disposer of all things. I thought there was somewhat extraordinary in my aunt's leaving us, for she had never left me with any person before, and I was glad I had an opportunity of gaining such instruction, as I had never before received in conversation; nor could I less admire the Friend's prudent care, in observing the apostle's advice, which I had before thought alluded only to the laying on of the bishop's hands, at the time of the young student's admission into holy orders, and the confirmation of youth. But now I knew, by experience, that, for want of prudence in particulars, I had been a sufferer: and, as an instance, shall mention one of the most uneasy meetings I ever attended; which was occasioned by a Friend's over-care, who had often pressed me to come up higher than where I frequently sat. I remarked, that the highest place in the meeting would be as little regarded by my aunt as the lowest, should she be inclined to make a disturbance there; yet, on frequent importunity,

being willing to shew some respect to the Friend's advice, I was prevailed with to advance a form or two. But when she came and saw I had not thoroughly taken her advice, she took me by the arm; and though I signified my desire of sitting still, as far as civility would bear, yet she compelled me to rise, and notwithstanding I shewed a desire of turning in at the first and the second seat I came to, yet she would not let me rest, till she had placed me by herself. Then, Oh! the hurries that my mind was in; for surely, had my aunt herself been there, she could not have confused my thoughts half so much; for though, at this time, when at meetings, I had a desire to draw nigh with Friends in spirit, yet it went much against my inclination to sit so near the place which, my aunt used to tell me, must be my seat; saying, all proselytes must be made preachers, and tell to the brethren the abominations of the wicked. Often would she tease me with such things; well knowing, I had in my nature a great aversion to women's preaching.

Here I sat, in a restless condition, several times purposing to go out; yet the regard I had for the Friend prevailed on me to stay. Glad, however, was I when the meeting broke up; and when it was over she gave me her hand; which I answered with my own, in token of forgiving her too forward, though loving act; yet not without telling her, when at home, the trouble she had given me, and desiring her never to use me so again.

Shall I here say, that good came out of evil? no surely, but sweet came out of bitter; for by this Friend's freedom of giving me her hand, several that were in the meeting did the same; and though this did not prove a time of confirmation to my faith,

but rather otherwise; yet it seemed like a sign of union, no one having done so before, and was pleasant.

I lost, for a time, the deep impression which the Friend's apprehension of my aunt's being distracted, had made on my mind; but thought afterwards, if, from the little he saw, he entertained apprehensions of that kind, what had I to fear, who had seen her so many times, a great deal worse; yet, what could I do, or what was there to be done; I could not renounce my salvation in order to appease my aunt.

These reflections caused distress in my countenance, which occasioned my aunt to say, she read the very Quaker in my face.

It seemed hardly possible I could ever know any sorrow like what I then felt; and my aunt, either by information, or her own observation, became acquainted with it; and by many frantic gestures, wrought in me a belief, that she was really as I imagined. My soul now fled to the Almighty for refuge, and I sat before her a witness of her frantic behaviour, with more solidity and composure than she expected. At last, she came up to me, and said "I am mad; thou, thou hast driven me mad! and I am mad!" I was surprised to hear her say so, and thought there was some hope for me, as she had yet so much reason left as to tell me of the thing she knew I was so afraid of.

Upon my shewing so much indifference about it, she abandoned that scheme, and soon after, as one fainting in her hopes of victory, desisted from interrupting me in the street; yet, wishing to obstruct my desire of going to meeting, she would come to my room before the hour appointed; telling me, we would have a silent meeting, and I would gladly have had her keep to it, but it seemed an impossi*bility* on her part.

When I saw it was her intention, by this practice, to keep me at home, in order to prevent it, I set out so much the sooner; and she, on the other hand, came still earlier, till she saw, that unless she rose sooner in the morning, my resolutions would outgo hers.

Many were the paces which I was forced to take in the fields on this account; but my labour was not in vain, for my aunt then left me to my liberty, and many precious meetings I enjoyed. As I had nothing of tradition to trust to, when there, my earnest desire was to seek the Lord; and he was found of my soul, to my inexpressible consolation.

In respect to silent meetings, my spiritual exercises at home had taught me how to improve by them: my heart inclining rather to sit in fear and reverence, and to watch against the tumult of unnecessary thoughts, than to be busy, as formerly, in the florid appearances of lip-worship. But yet, I would not have it supposed, that I knew no difficulty in my exercises; for surely, I have often felt the throng of natural cogitations to press so closely upon me, that I have found cause to implore the divine aid, and to breathe forth this ejaculation; Lord, if thou keep not the city, the watchman waketh but in vain!

But though I was freed from my aunt's molestations, I found it was only as the changing of a scene, and that the subtlety of the serpent was now more dangerous to me, than the rage of the lion had been.

My freedom of attending meetings, from which I had hitherto been much restrained, and the Lord's mercy in subduing those spirits which were a hinderance to my soul's serenity, I could not but gratefully acknowledge, with desires that I might answer the obligation. But I was yet inexperienced in the

craft of the enemy and deceiver of men, and needed the assistance of some prudent intimate friend, whose counsel might have set right bounds to my zeal. This subtle one, taking advantage of my earnestness, cunningly twined a thread of his own into that work which I was endeavouring to render acceptable to my God. I had, till this time, been taken up in seeking after an increase and establishment in the knowledge of the truth, and in keeping up a strict circumspection in my behaviour, that thereby I might not give my relations and acquaintances just occasion of trouble, or a pretence for vilifying the way of truth.

I had not yet made any great observations on dress, but thought to make a stand, and judge what was best to be done; and doubtless, so far I was in the right, whilst I made some alterations.

But now I found the prowling adversary, what he ever was—a malicious, deceitful, twining serpent, who, if he can but get in his head at the least opening of our inadvertency, will soon introduce his body, under an appearance of sanctity, to effect, if possible, the utter destruction of the soul. He saw that his aim of drawing me into any gross, obvious evil, was defeated; and as I had seen less of his stratagems in the angelical form, he now insinuated himself into my desires of being zealous for the honour of God, and elevated me above my proper height; so that I fell to judging, cutting, and trimming off every superfluous scrap from my dress; and not content with this, I went from my apparel to my shop. In less than a week, I made several sacrifices of value; and so hurried was I in this blind zeal, that I seemed impatient for more fuel. And having gone through, as I thought, at home; I next let out the busy eye

on others. There were but few who escaped my judgment, forgetting that tender advice (Luke vi. 37,) "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." I noticed each point of behaviour and apparel; till so great a critic had I become, that I seemed all speculation on the more minute things; neglecting the weightier matters, as faith, mercy, and the love of God, which, surely, I ought to have regarded, though not to have left the other wholly undone.

To what extravagance I had gone in this respect, the all-penetrating Eye best saw, and was pleased to look in compassion on the mistake of my intentions, and most graciously to illumine my understanding; giving me plainly to see, that I was quite out of that charity, without which, the apostle says, all our works profit nothing. So tenaciously did I adhere to this thing, that I saw not the deceiver, till I discovered such passions predominant in me, as I had never observed before. My temper became uncharitable, and unmerciful; I looked with an evil eye on the innocent; and was incapable of either pleasing myself or being pleased with others. But according to the greatness of my error herein, so was my abasement; and I was at length brought down so low, as to be capable of hearing the small voice of Wisdom, saying, "Who hath required this at thy hand?"

Now was I filled with shame; the serpent had beguiled me, and by his cunning had given me more uneasiness than by all his roaring. I acknowledged my fault, and begged forgiveness and future protection of the Almighty; who in his great condescension, made up the breach and restored the path to walk in. Yet had I given the vaunting one room to sport with my indiscretion! and he would often

bring into my thoughts the loss I had sustained, by his poisonous insinuations, even when no more of the effect of it remained than was necessary to guard me against the same devices in future.

This exercise was scarcely abated, before another trial occurred.—My relations being still displeased that I should stay in the town, thought of another stratagem, which greatly surprised me, and added to the trouble which the destruction of my substance, as before related, had given me.

My uncle having been to London about our affairs, reported on his return, that, on account of a large debt of my father's, who had been dead thirteen years, a suit in Chancery was commenced against him. This report ran current; and my uncle gave out, that as I was under age, he would take again those effects which he had put into my hands, though I had not received one quarter of my equivalent.

The unwelcome intelligence was brought to me by many. I say unwelcome, because I had contracted some debts in the way of business, which, my uncle said, he could and would refuse to pay. My aunt had broken up my school, and my former acquaintance having withdrawn their custom, my trade was at a stand, and had been so above a year, except for some few trifles, as before mentioned; so that I was now sensible, that the things I had destroyed were not my own. Having some acquaintance with Counsellor Hollingshead, I laid before him my straits, and he civilly told me, I might be quite easy on account of the debt; adding that, if there had been any truth in it, he should have heard of it from my uncle, who used to take his advice; and besides, he knew my father's creditors had met with due honour. In respect to my uncle's taking back the effects he had

entrusted me with, it was at his pleasure, and he might refuse to pay the debts contracted, if the bills were made in my name, unless he had given his promise to pay them. The Counsellor desired me, if I had any farther trouble, to let him know it, and he would speak to my uncle for me.

Thus was I fully satisfied concerning my father's debt; and, in a little time after, was comfortably visited with the breathings-in of the love of God, in these few comprehensive words; "Fear not, I have overcome the world." Had my trouble been even redoubled, like Job's, surely I should in this season of favour have forgotten it. Yet when it subsided, I found there remained two occasions for sorrowful reflection: the one was—paying off my creditors; which I soon got over, as I had cash enough to balance all but one, from whom I had received a parcel, which, through the smallness of business, was nearly entire; and this I sent back, with money to answer any deficiency or damage. It was kindly received, and I was very easy respecting it. But as to the other affair—by destroying the articles, I had put it out of my power to restore them; and this dwelt longer with me; yet, as I lived to come of age, I took the debt myself, and became reconciled to bear it; though not without a belief, that if I had had a friend to give me advice, it would have been otherwise.

Here I bemoaned myself before the Almighty, that I had lost my parents, disobliged my relations, and had no friend to take more notice of me than is common amongst the generality of professors; and, indeed, how could I expect that any would busy themselves to take the care of me, in any degree, without my express desire?

I became more and more sensible of the danger to

which my years, as well as other circumstances, might expose me; and I preferred many strong desires to the Most High, that, in his wisdom he would appoint for me a faithful friend, who would check my errors, as well as encourage me in virtue; one that was capable of instructing me by experience. These desires were often accompanied with a promissory hope and belief, that I could subject myself to the counsel, and bear the reproof of such an one; but where to find such a friend I knew not; I was afraid to trust my own judgment, and often supplicated the Invisible Being to direct me in the choice.

Accordingly, it thus happened: J. Toft was visited with sickness, and brought so low, that several Friends who met, did not know but it must be to take their final adieu. I had also the favour to be in the chamber, and heard many things worthy of regard; but that which struck me most deeply was, his expression of an earnest desire for my preservation in the truth, and a kind recommendation of me, as a young person, to the Friends present, that they would have me under their notice. I was truly touched with this sense of paternal care, and secretly desired his life, and the restoration of his health; which, as it pleased the Almighty to grant, I was no longer at a loss for a friend; conceiving that in him, whose kindness towards me was manifested under such circumstances, I might reasonably hope to find such an one as I desired. From that time I looked on him with a just regard, and with a resolution that, whenever I found occasion for advice, I would apply to him for it. Nor was it long before my exigency seemed to require it.

The Beloved of my soul, who, in my tender state, had so graciously replenished my heart, now hid his face from me; and I was not indulged with those

times of solace, which I before had so plenteously enjoyed: I waited and waited the return of the dearest object of my soul, often querying, Why stayeth my Beloved so long? or, What have I done since his last visitations, to occasion his thus hiding himself from me? Impatient, I sought him in my chamber, in meetings, and in the fields—places where I had used to receive his favour; but these seemed now to have lost their lustre, as well as my Beloved his benevolence towards me. I sought him, but I found him not: like the spouse, in the Canticles, I was ready to ask, Have you seen my Beloved? I was disconsolate days and nights, and I may say, I mourned as one wanting her mate. Still I thought my tears moved not his pity, and his ear seemed deaf to all my cries; whilst the imperious watchman wounded me, and the cruel enemy upbraided me with all I had gone through for my Beloved's sake, telling me I had better have staid in Egypt, than thus to languish in the wilderness. Great were the conflicts I here met with, not knowing why it should be thus: and fearing I was dying to all that was spiritual, I at length resolved to make application to my friend.

I went to his house; and while I waited a suitable opportunity to speak to him, the tears trickled down my cheeks: yet when I had unbosomed my complaint, I received great satisfaction; for, from his kind inquiry of my past conduct, I found my opinion of his friendship confirmed. From his tender advice my soul was encouraged to hope a little longer: and, to my inexpressible joy, in some days after, I felt the influence of Divine Love suggesting to my mind, Follow on to know the Lord; Joseph, the spiritual Joseph, is yet alive. Oh! surely here I found again that inestimable jewel, the pearl of my best affection,

and the life of my hope, with such revivings as Jacob experienced, when he saw the assurance of the welfare of his son: and my soul bowed under an humble sense of gratitude; saying, It is enough, I will go down and see him ere I die.

It was a time of true humility, tenderness, and love. My covenant was renewed; and it remained for some time as a summer season, or, "as the time when the voice of the turtle is heard." Yet at intervals, I could not but reflect on former days, and conclude, that the smallest degree of my uncle and aunt's reconciliation, would add to my happiness. As these thoughts increased, so did my desire of making a trial; and one evening I went to their house, and knocked at the door, stranger-like, as indeed I was, not having been there for above two years.

Their maid let me in; and I suppose I much surprised them. They were sitting alone by the fire. I just said, "How do you do?" and stood within the house, a little distant from the door. My uncle looked very sorrowful, and if he spoke at that time, he only said, "I have no pleasure in seeing thee." My aunt said enough, and called me many impudencies for coming. I stood about half an hour, and then bidding them farewell, my aunt came with me a part of the way back, scolding me as we went. I thought this was but poor encouragement, yet was truly glad I had seen them.

In about six weeks, I had a desire to go again. I went in the former manner, knocked, and stood as before; and after a little while my uncle said, "Thou mayst sit down." My aunt then fetched some books, (which, I believe, were the same that Bennet would have lent me),* and read several absurd passages; to

* See page 115.

which I only said, "I hope you do not think that any sect can be so ridiculous as to believe and practise those things." During this interview my uncle sat at a distance; I staid a little longer than before, and my aunt let me come home quietly.

Thus I went several times to see them, watching for permission; believing, that to go without it, might expose me to danger: but in my fourth or fifth visit, my uncle said to the maid, "Set her something to eat." I could truly have said that his love was sufficient; for I was so satisfied with this little return of it, and with my aunt's increased quietness, that my heart was ready to overflow. I went to the table, and before I ate, a contrite thanksgiving arose in my soul to God.

After this, I took the liberty to go at sundry times to see them, and had frequent opportunities to remark, that I still had a place in their affection; which answered my desire; nor could I hope for more, as there always was, and is, a contrariety betwixt the spiritual and natural dispositions. They continued to return my visits, and behaved kindly to me ever after.

A little past the twenty-fourth year of my age, I was married, with the approbation of my friends, to Samuel Lucas: he was a worthy man and well respected. My uncle would not come to the meeting, but came to our dinner; and my aunt visited us the next day. They both behaved lovingly and affectionately to my kind husband; and afterwards, were very tender of our children, my aunt exceedingly so; and indeed, it yields me satisfaction, as often as I remember the public testimonies she gave, before her death, of my behaviour towards her in the time of my convincement. Though I believe, she

continued to think it was right in her to restrain me from going on in a way so different from her own judgment, and from what she thought was right; yet she acknowledged that she was angry, and exceeded proper bounds; and that she never saw me behave unbecomingly, or heard me give her an unhandsome word. She was, again, as civil to Friends as before I went to meetings; and at times asked several Friends of my acquaintance to her house, and entertained them freely.

I may now conclude my narrative thus far, with truly saying, how blessed I was in my situation! having a loving, kind, and tender husband; our lawful endeavours made prosperous; the affections of my relations restored; and, above all, the blessing of the Almighty sanctifying these enjoyments to my soul, to the praise and adoration of his love. Here was I permitted to dwell as under the pavilion of the goodness of God, yet not without something still to combat with in my secret exercises.

I thus persevered comfortably for two years after my marriage, when the best Physician, whose penetrating eye saw the malady of my soul, prepared a bitter cup for the purging out a venom that lurked there, which I had imbibed from the malicious adversary of truth, before, and even after, my going to meetings, and which remained to this time. Hence issued a fiery trial, by which my professions of faith and affection were to be proved.

This may well be as a second part of my history, and was the most trying, as it went very near to my spiritual as well as temporal life. The war was not with flesh and blood, but with the Majesty on high; under the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience.

I have before observed, that to be an Israelite indeed, had attracted my desires; but little did I suspect what I had to undergo, before my heart was cleansed from guile, and delivered from that wrath which the enemy had been heaping up in me against the day of wrath.

To introduce this heavy relation, I must go back to my childhood, and say,—that the first time I ever heard a woman preach, from a prejudice imbibed from my companions, and probably, an aversion in my own nature, I thought it very ridiculous; and the oftener I had opportunities to witness it, the more I secretly despised it. At the time that I joined with Friends, this was one of my strongest objections to them; but I endeavoured to silence it, by concluding, that others might do as they pleased, and so would I.

My aunt, as I have hinted, often alluded to it, as she knew my dislike to the practice, from my former confession; and I have no doubt, the serpent, by means of this prejudice, injected his venom the more deeply; for since I have found out his workings, I have remembered a secret fear, which I had at times on this account, and which this cunning enemy had allayed, by reminding me of my many protestations against it. The apprehension, however, continued, that I should certainly become a preacher, which greatly distressed me: the allowance of women's preaching being the only dislike I had to the discipline and order of the church; yet still I satisfied myself with many inconsiderate resolves against it.

A good opportunity was allotted me for shaking off those shackles which the fiend was fastening on me;

but which I lost, and have remembered it many times with sorrow.—Being in discourse with a Friend, he frankly asked me, if I had any scruples? or whether I was satisfied with the principles of Friends? I stopped short in my mind, apprehending, if I should mention women's preaching, that he would think I spoke with regard to myself. Thus was I baffled; and I answered, that I was satisfied in the principle itself. At that time my idea of preaching was, that it was an act of love and friendship, separate from obedience; and glad could I have been, like Moses, if all the Lord's people had been so inclined; women excepted.

I continued thus for some years, till I became such a slave to my fears, that I could not say, "Thy will, O Lord, be done;" but, like Naaman, the captain of Syria, would fain be excused from this thing. I now began to believe that such exposures were something more than voluntary offerings, and was convinced, from many proofs, that my state had been as clearly spoken to by my own sex, as by the other; yet, such was my perverseness, that, one day, I had much difficulty to stay the meeting, [when a woman Friend ministered,] though I could not help acknowledging within myself, that it would have been an acceptable testimony, had it come from a man. Thus great was my prejudice; but greater, yes I may say, infinitely greater, were the condescensions of God; for I was still favoured in my waitings with a sense of his living presence. The mysteries of true divinity were opened to my understanding; and through the influences of divine love has my cup overflowed with such acknowledgments as these—"Oh, my Beloved! if thou dealest so bountifully with me, my breast will be too narrow

to contain thy love; Oh! withhold thy hand, or I shall certainly speak of thy goodness to others." And I really believe, had I embraced that opportunity, and joined with the Lord in his workings on my mind, I should have been delivered from my fears and escaped those cross occurrences which I have since waded through: but here my poor soul shrunk from the cross of Christ, whose yoke, to the passive mind, becomes easy and his burden light. Such was my weakness, that through short-sightedness and the false suggestions of the enemy, I started aside; and may truly say, the longer I carried my burden the heavier it proved: and I now have, with regret, to look back and confess, that instead of closing with the visitations of love, I joined with my inveterate enemy, and resolved not to wait for or encourage any farther discoveries. Thus did I harden myself, wretched creature that I was! And when I have felt the power of the Almighty moving with love upon my mind, I have no less than said, "I will have no more understanding;" and have sundry times shut my eyes when the book has been, as it were, put into my hand, and the best Interpreter has been near. So I withstood that tender love which followed me; and have risen from my chair to fix my thoughts on other objects.

My soul is deeply affected with the goodness of God in the continuation of his mercies towards me, and under a sense of the sad state I was then in, whilst the enemy had rule, and He who shed for me his most precious blood, was rejected at the hazard of the salvation of my soul; so I sat down far short of a true Israelite.

Thus went I on, stifling conviction, till I was lulled into a spiritual lethargy; in which I lay, till the

compassionate God, who wills not the death of a sinner, was pleased to arouse me to a consideration of what I had been doing: and I found enough to do to keep from sinking under the bitter reflections I had brought upon myself by my rebellious proceedings: yet through the unutterable goodness of God, I was again revived by his favours.

Having recovered a little from this state of deep affliction, I was visited with weakness of body; so that both myself and others thought I was near death: but it pleased the Lord, in an unexpected hour, to give me this assurance—"Thou shalt not die, but live, to declare what I have done for thee." This was still so contrary to my desires, that I could not rejoice at the lengthening of my days; for now I believed I should certainly be tried. Oh! the days and nights of conflict that followed this intimation. My countenance changed, my health seemed daily impaired; the solitary places were made witnesses of my grief; and as the years increased so did my exercise, till I had another visitation of sickness, and was, to all appearance, past recovery. Most willingly would I have yielded unto death; choosing rather to die than live to be any more disobedient: and it pleased the Lord to prove me again and again in the secret of my soul, whether I would live to be obedient to his requirings, or die: my choice was, rather to die than live to be a preacher. Yet it pleased him in his wisdom to raise me again, contrary to the expectation of those that beheld me; none of whom, at this time, knew any thing of the exercise of my mind, which increased to such a degree as cannot well be expressed. My body trembled as a thing shaken; and my groans were like those of a dying person. But I had learned, by dear expe-

rience, to cleave unto the Lord; and when I felt the power, what if I say, of his might, I sought out places most proper to receive it, and bowed in prostration: from the weight of it I have affectionately burst forth in this language, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" And as I believed it was a preparation for a further exercise, I often begged that he would be pleased to make me able to bear whatever he should think meet, in his wisdom, to lay upon me: indeed, sweet was his love and merciful his dealings, many times renewing his covenant with my soul. Yet here I was not to continue, but was led again to the test of my fidelity.

Being in meeting, in a comfortable frame of spirit, I found a motion in my soul to worship God in vocal prayer; and although I had known the same power in my own chamber, and with pleasure submitted to it there, yet here, not yielding to the impulse, my heart and all that was within me became confused; the whole fabric was shaken: and this was taken notice of by a Friend that sat behind me, who, as soon as meeting was over, asked me how I did; saying, she was sure I had been ill. I answered, (as well I might,) that I was but indifferent. This seemed a good caution to me, as I desired to keep my exercise to myself.

Not many more meetings passed before I was tried again; when I fixed my body as firmly as I could, but found it impossible to still my mind, knowing too well how it was with me; though the whisperer would persuade me it was all imagination.

In this way I trifled so long, that the displeasure of the Almighty seemed hot against me, and life and death were set before me. I was in confusion, both at home and abroad, wishing myself any other creature. I harassed myself, till I could bear it no longer;

and at length concluded it would be best to mention it to a Friend : I did so, and he signified that it had been for some time on his thoughts that something of that sort lay upon me. And though I here proved, that it was not in man, by the force of argument and tender advice, to subject my stubborn will, yet I received some advantage, and acknowledged the truth of his remarks : I did not, however, closely follow them, but became in myself as a piece of contradiction. Sometimes I would follow the Lord, and then resolve otherwise : I went to meetings as a slave goes to his labour. At home I durst not sit down in solitude, being sure to meet with judgment ; and into company I could not go, without wounding myself by pretending to be what I was not ; I was unwilling to be suspected of being grave, and concluded that every one who looked on me earnestly, knew how it was with me.

Thus was I harassed, as betwixt the upper and the nether millstone ; often wishing for death, and that I never had been born. Great was my strait ; I could not go back again, because I was not able to shake off the principle of truth ; but had thoughts of flinging myself into the jaws of death. Yet, for ever praised be the name of the Lord, his mercy withheld the devourer and preserved me ; giving me to see into his false insinuations, and to believe that the life, which it was in his power to take at his pleasure, would not be a sufficient atonement for those rebellions I had been guilty of ; and I was brought to an abhorrence of the thoughts which I had conceived. Herein did the goodness of the Lord appear so evidently, that I resolved to keep close to meetings. But alas ! when there, instead of keeping close to my exercise, through fear I kept myself from it, and sat, as it appeared to me, empty, void, and waste :

—empty of those desires I used to possess—void of all that was good—and waste, as being laid aside by the Almighty; and all through a slavish fear that I could not draw nigh to God. I sat as though I had nothing to do but to see, with a wishful eye, others partake of that food which my soul stood in need of. Yet my state was different from that of being at ease in Zion; for when I looked at those who, I thought, were in a right frame of mind, they seemed to me to be feeding at the Lord's table, while my hungry soul stood in a state of estrangement from him, without courage enough to seek the scattered crumbs.

Thus it was with me many days; till in one meeting, growing faint, a state of drowsiness overtook me, a thing with which I was not naturally beset; yet so far did it prevail, that I was forced to pinch myself, to keep awake. Now I thought myself worse than ever I had been in my life; for in childhood I had the form, which I left to possess the power. Here I found not so easy an access as I had expected; and though I sought and sought, instead of meeting with my True Friend, I met with my enemy, dressed in the doctrine of election and reprobation. Into this I had been led some years before, and now I had much difficulty, through the sense of my own unworthiness, to shake it off; labouring hard against the temptation of destroying myself, and foolishly wishing that some accident would do that office. But here the riches of God's grace again appeared: I was brought to see and acknowledge, that if my soul perished eternally, the Lord was but just in his dealings with me; and these considerations had some effect. I desired to be brought back to my former state, that I might have access to his power, be a witness of his

love, and be tried once more. My pen would fail, fully to set forth the condescensions and long-sufferings of the goodness of my Creator towards me. I here knew my pardon sealed: but my peace lasted not long; for I was quickly tried again and again; and still I did not give up. I was sensible that I flinched from that Power which was ready as a hand to help me, and therefore became worse and worse. "It will never be better with thee," suggested the enemy. I knew not which way to turn: I was weary of my own obstinacy, and would now see what I could gain by self-mortification; and as I could not work, I would eat but little. I studied several ways to afflict myself; and have thought, glad should I be if I had no tongue. Here again I knew the old prompter to be near to augment my distress; which, with my own disobedience, made the whole creation appear to be against me. Oh! I was in such perplexity, that I said, Now shall I fall by the hand of my enemy. I fretted and chafed at myself and every thing about me, and could not attain true submission.

At one time, as I was seriously reflecting on my situation, these thoughts passed my mind and surprised me; "If thou be a God of power, make me willing." This was no sooner past, but they were followed by the suggestion, "Soul, detest thou this presumption; for though he is a God of power, it is in his own time that he will redeem." I was astonished, and said, "Lord, what is it?" and it came thus before me; "There is war in heaven, Michael and the dragon." When the flutter was over, I remembered the passage where it is said, "In the day of my power my people shall be a willing people;" and I was comforted by it.

There also fell out another singular occurrence about this time, which I cannot well omit. I was fully persuaded that if I went on in this obstinacy, my house would be laid waste; and within a month afterwards, we had, in the view of many spectators, a wonderful deliverance from fire: during which, whilst others were busy in considering how it should have happened, I was as busy in reflecting on myself as the cause; which weighed me down in humble acknowledgments unto God, for his merciful preservation. The world, comparatively speaking, seemed now to be near an end with me; and it was as if a total eclipse was drawing on; every scene and object looked gloomy; and whichever way I turned my eye, an angry God appeared. There was no shelter for me—nothing now to defend myself with—no way of escaping—and nature must yield.

In a little time the trial of my obedience came again; and at that moment the enemy of my soul suggested, that if I got up I should not be able to stand; but, thanks to the Almighty, I was strengthened to try, and found him a liar. The expression of a few words produced a blessed change. There seemed now a new heaven and a new earth; old things passed away, and all things belonging to my state, became new; no more sense of guilt for past disobedience remained; but new embraces and new covenants filled up that joyful day. Yet I looked forward with anxiety to another meeting day; and though I formerly thought meetings did not come fast enough, yet now they seemed to come too soon. In two or three of them, I sat under a degree of slavish fear; yet truly desired to keep my integrity and obedience. At length a second trial came; I was moved to kneel down; and while I viewed the

place, my soul secretly breathed thus before the Lord, "Here is the place of my execution;" and seeing the boss, "This is the block whereon I must yield up the pride of nature, for a testimony of my obedience; remember me, O Lord! and the conflicts that I undergo to serve thee. Accept, O Lord! the sacrifice." I then kneeled down; and when I arose, this came into my mind—"the life that I must now live, must be by faith in Jesus Christ."

Persevering in obedience, it wrought unspeakable satisfaction, and brought my soul, by degrees, out of the place of thraldom and bondage. Thus, by the goodness of God, were the strong holds of sin and Satan brought down, and the joy of my salvation was restored. Meeting-times and days were pleasant again, whilst my soul worshipped the living God, as in the house of prayer.

Whilst I stand as on the bank of deliverance, resounding hosanna in the highest, having the harp of thanksgiving put into my hands, my song shall be of mercies and of judgments, through which my soul has been so far redeemed; and of the victory of the Lamb, by whose right hand and everlasting arm, my soul's enemies have been driven back, scattered, and put to flight.

Now, what have I to render to my God for this most glorious work, the salvation of my soul, but the humble acknowledgments of one of the most unworthy and vile of sinners; who, by his most gracious condescendings, is enabled and encouraged to ascribe unto him honour, adoration, dominion and renown, with praises and thanksgiving, as due to his eternal love, for evermore.

Upon perusal of the same,
My soul's enliven'd with a flame
Of holy zeal, that I may know
The hand of God in all I do.
Oh, that I may therein confide,
And by the righteous Judge be tried!
This is of my desire the scope,
That of my love, my faith, and hope,
I may not be asham'd; but have
A heritance beyond the grave:
Which to enjoy, Lord, grant that I
In fear may live, and favour die;
And that my soul may on the wing
Of hallelujah meet our King.

MEMOIRS

OF

FREDERICK SMITH,

WHO DIED AT CROYDON, IN SURREY,

THE 22ND OF THE FOURTH MONTH, 1823.

WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THOSE I COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST.—PHILIPPIANS III. 7.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Memoirs are extracted from manuscripts found in Frederick Smith's hand-writing, after his decease.

They were printed in *The Friend*, (a Monthly Journal,) in the year 1845: but as they are considered to be of too interesting and instructive a character to be restricted to the columns of a periodical publication, it has been concluded to reprint them in the present more permanent form.

The power of divine grace is eminently displayed in the conversion of such as have been grievously entangled in the snares of folly and vice; and their deliverance is calculated to encourage those who are concerned in christian love to deal with transgressors, to persevere in their endeavours to reclaim, with a hopeful mind; it also tends in a peculiar manner, to excite feelings of grateful admiration towards that compassionate Saviour, who is "the Healer of the breach—the Restorer of paths to dwell in."

The case of Frederick Smith presents a remarkable instance of the efficacy of this renovating power; not only as it enabled him successfully to contend against his many evil propensities, but also as it conducted

him through many singular trials and difficulties, to a settlement in the truth. Of this he appears to have been himself deeply sensible; and under the humbling conviction that he had been "forgiven much," he manifested by his zealous endeavours to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, that he "loved much."

His two "Letters," which conclude this little compilation, have passed through three editions as tracts; yet as it is probable that the present volume may come into the hands of many who have not met with them before, and as they are well calculated to promote that greatly important object—the best welfare of the rising generation, they are now appended to the Memoirs.

It is to be regretted that Frederick Smith did not continue his auto-biography later than about the year 1800; for although his latter years may not have furnished incidents so remarkable as those which occurred in the earlier part of his life, yet doubtless the Memoirs might have been continued instructively, as regards his further religious experience and service.

T. C.

Kingston, Fourth Month, 1848.

MEMOIRS

OF

FREDERICK SMITH.

I WAS born in London, the 28th of the Sixth Month, 1757; and before I was five years of age, was put to a boarding-school. I was naturally of a lively disposition, and very early susceptible of evil impressions; so much so, that I have frequently looked back with admiration to observe how soon the enemy makes his inroads. In general, the morals of children are not so much attended to as is requisite, in seminaries of this kind, and I very early contracted vicious habits from the example of the other boys, which every day ripened. Could I have seen myself, or have been seen as I really was, the increasing deformity of my mind would doubtless have discovered me to be a little monster of iniquity. Before I was nine years old, there was scarcely an evil incident to children of that age, with which I was not acquainted, and which I had not a hankering after; though I believe I sometimes had some serious thoughts, but they were so transient, that I hardly recollect them.

When I was about thirteen and a half years of age, I was taken from school, and sent to London to occupy a situation under Government, in the General Post Office;

where I found several lads about my own age. A near relation was Comptroller, and his brother held another situation in the same office: I was under their joint care, they having kindly undertaken to watch over me. I lived with them and their sisters; but as they had not room in their house to lodge me, a respectable lodging was provided for me in the neighbourhood. My relations were opulent people, and kept a great deal of what is called fashionable company; yet they did all they could to restrain me from following those evil propensities I so much delighted to indulge in; and they frequently rebuked those who visited them, when they made use of oaths, or introduced any wicked conversation in my presence. They were ignorant of the progress vice had made in my heart, and endeavoured to prevent the evil seed from being sown. But alas! the work was begun; and being associated with so many young lads, most of whom were under little or no restraint, whilst together we gave loose to our various inclinations; and I am ready to conclude, that from the age of fourteen till I was twenty, there were few who exceeded me in vicious conduct. The enemy, during these years of my youth, had strong hold of me; there was scarcely an evil gratification which he did not allure me with. My relations frequently remonstrated tenderly with me, and pointed out the consequences of my pursuing vice in the manner I did; but withal were as kind parents to me, endeavouring to heal rather than expose my weaknesses.

During this time for several years I did not enter a place of religious worship, except for some wicked purpose; yet I never lost sight of a sort of idea of a Supreme Being, and I believe, never went to bed without endeavouring to say my prayers; often even

when stupified with liquor, I waked in the course of the night or morning, and performed this apprehended duty. This I consider to be a strong proof of the beneficial effect of parental care, in endeavouring early to impress on the minds of youth, day by day, their duty to their Creator. This will, in most instances, as it did in me, preserve a chain of religious thoughtfulness and reverence to the great First Cause; it may often be as seed sown, which in time may expand, and from it the knowledge of divine things may be permitted to increase.

During this career of wickedness, there seemed [but little] to hinder my putting what was in my heart into execution; and as to what the world calls pleasure, I knew no restraint, the enemy continually finding out fresh food for my sensual appetite. At intervals I providentially found a stop, and the language passed through me, "Surely it will not be always thus with me—I shall at some time or other be caught in the trap of the enemy;" but such impressions lasted only for a few minutes. I remember once being so convicted in my mind, of the progress sin was making in me, that I flung myself on my bed, burst into tears, and cried to the Almighty for help. I was made sensible of the deplorable situation I was in, and said within myself, "Surely the enemy will overcome me at last, and I shall become a shame and disgrace to my family and myself." I strongly felt my depravity and weakness, and fervently prayed for help and strength to resist evil, and for forgiveness for my past wicked conduct. But this impression did not last a great while; I soon returned to my evil courses.

Owing to the kindness of my relations, at whose expense I lived, the greater part of my salary was

given me for pocket-money; so that I never troubled my parents for money, and they were ignorant how I went on. When I visited them in the country, on leaving them they used to give me very wholesome advice; and by their affectionate solicitude they so wrought upon me, as to make me resolve in my own mind, to be more circumspect in my conduct, and to leave those companions to whom I was as injurious as they were to me. A few days after my return to London, all these tender impressions would be obliterated, and I returned with redoubled vigour to an abandoned life.

Having received a fashionable education, and been instructed in all the accomplishments which, in the view of the world, constitute the gentleman, such as dancing, fencing, &c., I was equal to most in superficial knowledge, and was introduced into much fashionable company. I frequented balls, the theatres, musical entertainments, and other equally unprofitable amusements, till my twenty-first year; when, without the consent or knowledge of my friends, I married.

In consequence of this rash act, I had now to struggle with some difficulties; for so far from having made provision for a step of this sort, I had, during the last year or two, been so extravagant as to contract debts, which, though not to a great amount, were the occasion of considerable embarrassment. Some heavy family afflictions, which occurred at this period, brought me to a degree of recollection, and this was much assisted by the prudent demeanour of my wife, who although she had consented to our marrying clandestinely, yet carried herself so circumspectly as completely to wean me from all my dissolute companions; and thus, through her means, under

Providence, I was mercifully rescued from apparent certain ruin. Though most of our friends were disconcerted at the step we had taken, yet in a little time they became reconciled, and kindly assisted to increase my outward means: and as we were contented in our humble situation, and satisfied to live very frugally, also happy in each other, we were, as to outward matters, comfortable beyond our expectation.

About the year 1780, I had, at times, some serious impressions, and seemed to want something which outward enjoyments could not afford. For some time I attended the national worship; but not being satisfied, I frequented the meetings of Methodists and other dissenters: and though I apprehended these were more zealous and sincere than the generality of those of the church of England, yet my mind was so conscious of the deep wound which sin and corruption had made, that I was persuaded no superficial attempts could heal it; and I had a prospect of something beyond all that I had yet seen or heard, though I could not then describe the whole of my feelings, except as they were brought into action. I was still a strange jumble of inconsistency; for some things of a gross nature remained with me.

In the year 1782, I was subpœnaed by the Post Office to give evidence at the Old Bailey, against a man for robbing the mail; and during the time I was in waiting, I could not but take notice of the poor man's countenance, which seemed to exhibit a picture of distress. In an instant, as it were, my mind was filled with a variety of reflections on the nature of the crime. Surely, thought I, if [as respects myself] retributive justice were to take place, I should be placed where the criminal now stands. He perhaps

has committed this crime through necessity; probably he has not had the advantage of a good education, kind advisers, or any to instruct him in that which is good; whilst I have been cared for from my early youth: my parents have often warned me to refuse the evil and choose the good; they have given me a good education, and I have had many advantages denied to others; yet such is the depravity of my heart, that for years I have been leading a life of continued dissipation and folly. In thus viewing myself as compared with the prisoner at the bar, I was so struck with abhorrence of myself, and the sight of the dreadful precipice on which I had been standing, that I shed abundance of tears. A circumstance occurred during the trial, which excited in me an additional degree of thoughtfulness. One of the witnesses gave evidence which, though of no great importance, was not, in point of fact, correct; and had I been called upon, I should have been obliged to contradict him. This circumstance led me to consider the nature of an oath; that it was a solemn appeal to the Almighty that the matter then about to be asserted was the truth; that under such circumstances, (especially when the life of man is concerned.) an oath appeared to me of so much importance, as to make it highly improper to use one without a strong conviction of its solemnity. In fact, I began to doubt whether the taking of an oath is, under the christian dispensation, justifiable; for though but little versed in the Scriptures, I recollected that Jesus Christ had said, "Swear not at all." I was thus brought into a most trying situation, under the feeling of which, I earnestly supplicated the Almighty that I might be excused from giving evidence in this case; and in great condescension and pity to my

secret cries, he heard me, and I was not called upon. Under a deep sense of my own unworthiness and the goodness of my Heavenly Father, I resolved, with his assistance, to follow him wherever he should lead me. I left the court full of joy and gratitude, and in my feeble way, endeavoured to render the praise where it was due. Although thus seriously impressed on the subject of swearing, it is remarkable, that the impression had little or no effect in turning me from the foolish and wicked practice I was in, of profane swearing, and taking the great and holy name of God in vain.

About this time I was brought to a serious recollection of the many gracious visitations of the Almighty to my poor, wicked soul, and particularly his answer to my prayers; not only in the instance before related, but also in two others, during the dangerous illness of my dear wife, when I had earnestly and with many tears besought him to relieve her pain, which was very great, and continued for many hours, and it immediately ceased. I also began more plainly to see the natural proneness there was in me to evil, (in common, I imagine, with all the human race ;) this I could trace back in myself to a very early age, and could recollect some instances of sinfulness and depravity which even then filled me with shame. Thus was I introduced to a view of the degraded and fallen state of man by nature ; and feeling my inability of myself to overcome my evil passions and inclinations, I was led inwardly and fervently to implore divine help and instruction. Frequently while walking in the streets I have lamented that the churches (so called) were not opened, as in the countries where the Roman Catholic religion prevails, that I might pour out my soul before the Lord, and praise

him for the love which he had begotten in my soul; being ignorant that he does not (exclusively) "dwell in temples made with hands;" though I could not find the peace I was desirous of obtaining, when I attended the common worship in those places; which appeared to me extraordinary.

I had been in this seeking state for some time, when I became acquainted with a person belonging to the Society of Friends, who lived near us, at Walworth; whose company seemed very different to what I had been used to. A few months previously, the Quakers being mentioned in the course of conversation, my wife said, if ever she changed her religion, it should be to a Quaker; to which I replied, that the Quakers were a set of fools, and had no religion in them. But now I was of a different mind; and I requested the Friend above alluded to, to lend me some book relating to his principles, which at first he refused. Afterwards, with some reluctance, he lent me *Barclay's Apology*, cautioning me at the same time against too much earnestness in the perusal, and setting down as truths the sentiments of the author, till I had sufficiently weighed them in my own mind; adding that he believed with Peter, "that God is no respecter of persons," but that those of all religious denominations "who fear him and work righteousness, are accepted of him." I have often looked with much satisfaction at this conduct of the Friend, in not laying hands suddenly on me, and considered it a proof of his prudence and kindness; and indeed the kind, parental care and solicitude for my spiritual welfare, manifested by himself and his wife, though I was not within the pale of their religious belief, instanced such a liberal, tolerant spirit, and freedom from bigotry, as convinced me that Friends

were got far beyond most others in the substantial part of religion. I read the book with much attention, and was surprised to find that the fundamental part so exactly corresponded with the idea I had formed of the union that subsists between God and his creatures. I was also much instructed many ways, especially respecting the meaning of the words *Holy Ghost*, of which I had before been totally ignorant, as, I have reason to fear, is the case with thousands, who call themselves Christians: I could have said, as some did to Paul, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

One day, whilst I was reading *Barclay's Apology*, I told my wife I believed I should turn Quaker, the book I was then reading having opened my understanding respecting religion, more than any book I had ever read; and that it was withal so simple, and corresponded so exactly with the Scriptures, that it appeared to me to be the very truth,—or something to that purpose. She appeared to be much distressed at my expressing myself thus; and from that time, did all in her power to divert me from my purpose. This I was much surprised at, as I had buoyed myself up with the hope that she would as gladly receive the truth as myself; ignorantly supposing that it was only for want of the knowledge of a better way, that people remained in the form of godliness, without appearing to know any thing of the power.

I had now found the pearl of great price. My wife tried many ways to prevail with me to alter my purpose; and at last with many tears entreated me to desist, telling me that her health was much impaired by her uneasiness of mind; (which I have reason to believe was really the case;) at the same

time pointing out to me the danger of our circumstances being materially injured by my losing my situation in the Post Office, and the distressing prospect of our becoming estranged from each other, and our children divided, by my persisting in the intention of belonging to a different persuasion of religion from herself. I was at this time in the practice of attending the meetings of Friends; but these arguments, together with the love I bore to my dear wife, induced me to promise her I would not attend them any more. I kept my word for a week or two, and for a while absented myself from the Friend's house who had been so kind to me. But I had no peace herein; for having found the pearl of great price, I soon perceived it would be necessary to sell all that I had, if ever I meant to purchase so choice a treasure. In a short time I secretly called on my friends as before, and borrowed *John Richardson's Journal*, which was the first book of the kind I ever read; and I was surprised to find there were any persons of so late date who approached so nearly to the character of the saints of old; not being aware at that time, of the universal efficacy of redeeming love, and that this principle will, in all ages, produce the same effects. At this discovery I was much humbled as well as encouraged: and I now determined that nothing should hinder me from pursuing whatever I apprehended to be the mind and will of God. My wife soon became acquainted with my determination, which was cause of much unpleasant variance between us: her aversion to the change induced her to oppose me in every way she could; and I, as yet unmortified and naturally hasty, was impatient of contradiction; so that we knew very little condescension on either side.

I was now called upon to give some proof of my love to Him who was thus graciously visiting me. I was subpœnaed to give evidence in one of the courts of Westminster, respecting a person's hand-writing, to which I had been a witness. This brought me into a great strait; for I felt that I dared not take an oath; and my refusal, which could not be kept secret, I apprehended would endanger the loss of my situation. I called on my kind friend, to advise with him. He saw my difficulty, and I believe, felt for me in my distressed condition: but it seemed out of his power to assist me. He took me, however, to another Friend, an elder, who, he said, had a good deal of knowledge in matters of this sort; but alas! it was to little purpose; and I was taught that, in cases of difficulty, it is not to man we must look for help. I then waited on the attorney, told him the difficulty I was under, and endeavoured to prevail on him to get some other person in my stead. But he could afford me no relief, except that he asked me if I could take the Quaker's affirmation. I told him I did not know what it was; but when he showed it to me, I felt no objection. He therefore promised to prepare the way for me in the court, that I might have as little trouble as possible. During the time I had to wait in and about the court before I was called, which was about eight hours, I was exceedingly distressed in my mind. On being called, I informed the court I could not take an oath, and the affirmation was immediately offered to me. I instantly felt such a flow of peace and comfort to my poor, tried mind, as I had never experienced before; and I seemed so elevated, that everything about me appeared different from what it had before: it seemed as though I saw a new heaven and a new earth, that

all things had become new, and all things of God: and I returned home joyful, and strengthened with the enriching balm of heavenly love in my bosom.

Although this event terminated so favourably, yet it seemed probable, that in consequence of my objection to taking an oath, I should, at some future time, lose my situation under government. This was a continual exercise to me; and it seemed desirable that I should be prepared for such an occurrence: and having an opportunity of laying out my property in merchandize, without much consideration, I embraced it. This step laid the foundation of much future difficulty. At the earnest request of my wife, I also engaged in partnership with a near relation of hers; which I was induced to do, principally from a desire to convince her that I was willing to do all in my power to make her comfortable. This person had been imprudent, and had become involved in his affairs; but as I was informed it was not to a great amount, and my income was handsome, I hoped to be able by this means to extricate him from his difficulties, as well as by attention to business, to do something for myself.

I had not entered into this engagement many weeks, before what I had anticipated [relative to my objection to take an oath] took place. I was again subpœnaed to give evidence against a man who had robbed the mail. In this case the affirmation would be of no avail; and I very soon learned, that if I refused to take the oath, I should most probably lose my place. My distress was now very great; for I had discovered that my partner's affairs were in a worse state than I had before understood. I had become much encumbered; and having but little knowledge of trade, I was soon plunged into

great difficulties. Thus I had not only the prospect of losing my situation, but with it my only means of extricating myself from my difficulties, and carrying on my business; so that I was now likely to be left in a worse situation than if I had not embarked in trade. Under these distressing circumstances, the first step I took, was to represent my situation to my relation, the Comptroller of the Post-office, in order that, by being thus timely apprized of my objection to take the oath, they might have opportunity of doing what they conceived to be right, towards promoting the course of justice in the affair; and I requested that he would inform the Postmasters-general.

The Comptroller and his brother were greatly affected; they considered me as their child, having brought me up from my youth, and treated me with parental affection. I was rapidly getting forward in the situation I held; and to see my fair prospects thus blasted, and that I was obstinately bent, not only on my own ruin, but also that of my family, was a great disappointment to them, and grieved them much. They tried to persuade me to alter my resolution, but in vain; and the Comptroller reluctantly complied with my request. The kindness of my relations at this time, was more than I could well bear, and was a greater trial to me, than all the threats and unkindness of my superiors in office. I was interrogated by the Secretary and Solicitor, and threatened by them, that if I did not comply, I should be imprisoned. By order of the board, I attended at the Post-office, to give my reasons to the Postmasters-general, the Earl of Tankerville and Lord Carteret. I was treated with much unbecoming rudeness, and endeavours were used to have me in-

stantly dismissed: but the Solicitor informed the board that this could not be done till I had been put upon my trial, whether I would take the oath or not. I was therefore ordered to attend at the assizes at Aylesbury on the 8th of the Third Month, 1784.

Owing to a combination of circumstances of a very trying nature,* I was at this time very much distressed; and under the pressure of my afflictions, I wrote the following letter to [my friend at Walworth]:—

Haymarket, February 10th, 1784.

Dear Friend,

I think I never, in the whole course of my life, sat down to write when my spirits were in so unhappy a state. We may boast, and really imagine ourselves capable of enduring every possible misery; but our minds are, in general, too susceptible of buoyant impressions, and till experience shows our weakness herein, we bid defiance to the mutability of human life. Whilst meeting the casual accidents which attend mankind, we are too apt to lose sight of the intention of Providence, in thus reminding us that our dependence ought to be solely on God. Such, I fear, has been my case; for, had I made proper use of the many kind admonitions and gentle reproofs with which I have been favoured, I should not now be left to the agonizing tortures which I too sensibly feel. The quick progress of my misfortunes, and the time of their commencement, would at most tempt me to doubt whether I am acting right, did

* Among these was an accident my little girl had met with: the nursemaid carelessly suffered her to fall off the bed, which occasioned the formation of an abscess inwardly, and a consequent gradual decay; so that she became reduced, to all appearance, to the last stage of a consumption.

not the assurance in my breast bring that matter to a certainty. My little girl came home to us this day, very ill with the measles, which, added to the other complaints, occasioned by the distressing accident she met with, gives us reason to fear her dissolution will be rapid; and yet I cannot but hope, if she can but combat this last, she will get the better of her other disorders. A matter of some consequence to my temporal affairs has occurred, which, I believe, must bring my affairs to a crisis. Some time since, the Liverpool bag of letters was missing, and it happened I was the only person in the office on the day it should have arrived, whose business it was to take particular notice of the affair. A man is now in custody for the robbery, and I am ordered to attend as a principal witness on his trial.

You see how I am situated; and though I thought myself before sufficiently encumbered with misfortunes, it is my lot, I fear, to have many more to encounter. O! the world, this miserable world! it is on *that* my heart has been set; for were I pure and upright in the sentiments I profess, I should doubtless be happy in this opportunity of a voluntary sacrifice. Look at my situation my dear friends;—my little all ventured to America and no prospect of a return;—the adventure with my partner likely to prove as unfortunate;—a child dying;—and my other means likely to be torn from me, because I will not prove treacherous to my God. But above all, the distraction of my family engrosses my attention. To them, all my actions appear as folly and madness; nor can all the arguments I make use of convince them to the contrary, considering as they do, that my misfortunes arise from a determination to pursue what will eventually terminate in my ruin, but which I

fallaciously think will lead to happiness; and that since heretofore the Almighty had blessed me with abundance, when my conduct was in every respect different, it proved that he was perfectly satisfied with me; that consequently, the course I am pursuing is sinful, and that these are just judgments for the wrong steps I have taken. It is impossible for one individual to judge of the inward state of another's heart, nor how far there may be a necessity for an alteration in his conduct. At present I am wholly at a loss how to act, with regard to my affair with my partner. I undertook it on the presumption of my income at the office assisting towards discharging the debt; but that income, I fear, is no more. To God alone I submit myself, and he alone can relieve my distress; nor have I a doubt, notwithstanding the unfavourable appearance of things, that I shall yet meet every comfort from him. If you can spare time to write me a few lines, I shall take it as a favour. I would call on you, but think it would give uneasiness at home. With kindest love to you and yours, I remain your sincere friend,

FREDERICK SMITH.

To JAMES MADDOCKS, Walworth.

In reply to the foregoing, I received the following truly acceptable letter:—

"*Walworth, Second Month* 12*th*, 1784.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Thy very affecting letter of the 10th instant is received. The multiplicity and weight of thy present afflicting trials may well affect thy spirits: we are struck with awful feelings at thy manner of expressing thy sufferings, and pray that He who permits

them, will be pleased to support thee. His will must be submitted to in all his dispensations. We receive good things, and we ought not to murmur at what may appear evil. We hope thou wilt experience Divine help. [Our heavenly Father] never forsakes those who trust in him; but if He require all to be given up, we must submit and prove ourselves worthy. We hope these grievous appearances will disperse, and consolation be afforded. Perhaps thy child may be restored,—and the American affair turn out more favourable than thou at present mayst fear.—The Post-office affair is, I confess, a matter of great consequence, but possibly may not be attended with the effect thou naturally dreadest so much. Is there no possible relief to be obtained by applying to the Post-masters-general, or Secretary, to excuse thy appearance, either by thy own or some friends' interest with them, to prevent the disagreeableness of what will be the consequence in court? If I can be of any service in any shape in my power, it will be a great pleasure to me. The concern in the Haymarket I leave at present;—the frowns of thy relations are not much to be feared; thou art superior [to them].—I am thy sincere friend,

"JAMES MADDOCKS."

Previous to my going to Aylesbury, where the assizes were held, my dear child was restored to us, which I considered a great favour. The measles caused so great a revulsion in her constitution, that in a few days after the eruption appeared she began to revive; and in a few weeks she recovered.

At this time, however, my wife was taken seriously ill, occasioned by the distress of her mind in viewing the awful prospect before us, and the uneasiness my

conduct had given her; which was not to be wondered at, seeing that what I did to procure peace of mind to myself, appeared to involve her and our young family in ruin. She was so ill on the day I left her, that the physician who attended her expressed his fears of her recovery. I was however obliged to leave her, and I took my farewell of her under much affliction, having great cause to fear we should never meet again in mutability. This was on a First-day. I went to Westminster Meeting in the morning, when a Friend asked me if I had been recommended from the meeting I came from. I replied that I did not understand what he meant; that I was not a member of the Society of Friends, whatever I might hereafter be; that I was then about to set off for the Buckingham assizes, where, on account of my refusal to take an oath, I expected to be deprived of all I possessed in this world. The Friend seemed affected, and said he had observed me so constantly attend meetings, and sit so solidly in them, that he thought I had been a member.

I accompanied the Solicitor to Aylesbury; he behaved kindly to me, and the company who were collected there showed me more respect than I had expected. A circumstance occurred during my stay, which afforded me much instruction. Having been at several meals with those who came thither to attend the trial, I was thankful in observing more decency than is usual in mixed companies, especially after dinner and supper. Two persons were present who had been members of the Society of Friends, but were disowned, one a member of Parliament, the other a merchant. The former expressed to me his love towards the Society; but I had afterwards good reason to doubt his sincerity, at least as it regarded

myself. The last evening but one that we were together, the Solicitor, who sat at the head of the table, desired us to fill our glasses; but having all along felt a particular objection to countenancing drinking, I had uniformly refused toasts; and now being urged more than usual, I gave them my reasons for refusing. Still, however, the company continued to press me; and to prevent further solicitation I filled my glass with water only. This answered their purpose; and a scene of as great indecency and confusion followed as I had ever witnessed. A clergyman, who was also a magistrate in the county, was more wicked and obscene than the rest; and to my astonishment, I observed the Member of Parliament, whom I had considered as my friend, ridiculing the distress I was not able to hide. I took my candle and went to bed, lamenting that in all probability I had been the cause of it; for had I remained firmly attentive to my inward feelings, I might have been instrumental in convincing those present of the folly of the practices they were in. But it was now too late, and all I could do was to learn experience from the things I had suffered. It was a lesson that I have often recurred to, when my resolution has been tottering under trials of faith and obedience. In the morning I found out some Friends in the town, who were kind to me; and I became acquainted with a young man named John Grant, who was also subpœnaed. In his company I spent the remainder of the time I had to stay at Aylesbury less unpleasantly than I otherwise should have done; and we were afterwards much united in religious fellowship.

And now the time came for me to manifest my love to Him who had allured me out of Egypt into the wilderness—who had spoken peace to my guilty soul,

and had forgiven my many transgressions and backslidings. Under a sense of these mercies, I appeared in court; and when I was called, I told the judge, without hesitation, that I could not take an oath; which having done, my heart seemed to overflow with sweet peace, and I was strengthened to bear the scurrility and the ill-natured remarks of a counsellor, who had no doubt been hired for the purpose of making me appear odious to those present, and to give the Postmasters-general a plea for displacing me. He, however, so far overshot himself, that several of the counsel rose as one man, and one on behalf of the rest pleaded my cause, and requested that the counsel who had treated me so roughly might be desired to desist; observing, that I had a right to refuse taking the oath if I chose it; which the other attempting to reply to, the judge, with seeming displeasure, told him to sit down, adding, that it was the business of the Postmasters-general and not of the court, to take cognizance of the conduct of their officers. He then kindly asked me if I chose to take the oath; which I refusing to do, he told me I might leave the court if I pleased, as they had nothing further to say to me. I immediately hastened home, where I found my wife much better; and I had the abundant satisfaction to learn from her, that during my absence, at the time she appeared in the greatest danger, her mind was so filled with comfort and Divine love, that she longed to be dissolved; and she believed that had she gone then, it would have been well with her. This account filled my poor heart with gratitude to the Lord, for thus remembering me in the midst of my deep probations; for surely no one had greater reason to be humbled in the dust than myself, an unworthy sinner.

Having been thus mercifully helped through so many difficulties, I experienced a degree of strength to encounter fresh ones. I was now in expectation of losing my place in the Post Office, the justice of which I could hardly reconcile, seeing that my refusal to comply with the requisition of my employers was well known to arise from my adherence to integrity of principle, and not from a desire to evade any part of my duty as a servant to the public. I thought myself justified in using endeavours to retain my situation on account of my family; for though I had not lost all my property, by far the greater part of what I had accumulated was now gone: and in case of my dismissal I apprehended I should be entitled to some compensation for past services, my youth having been spent in the laborious duties of my employment. I therefore used what interest I could with the Postmasters-general, through the medium of my kind friend and relative the Comptroller. This proving ineffectual, I thought it right to address the Secretary, that he might use his interest with them. I accordingly sent him the following letter:—

General Post Office, March 17th, 1784.

SIR,

It is with much regret I find myself under the necessity of giving you trouble; but the circumstance of my having been obliged to attend the Assizes at Aylesbury, and there practically to avow those sentiments which I conscientiously believe to be perfectly consistent with the true principles of Christianity, though not altogether agreeable to the opinion of those who profess the established religion of this kingdom, has rendered it almost impossible for me to

avoid it. It must be confessed, I am in a very disagreeable predicament on account of my family, which urges me to request your kind interference with the Postmasters-general on my behalf. I am well aware of the necessity there is for every precaution to prevent abuses in the management of the business of the Post Office; and the present unfortunate affair may have suggested to you a new species of fraud, which might hereafter be practised by parties whose duty it might be to bring others to justice, by pretending to be of the Society of Quakers. It must be allowed that such a surmise may not be without foundation; but if the character of the party, under circumstances of this kind, were considered, the execution of such a fraudulent intention might be prevented. I have been more than thirteen years (half my life) in the Post Office, the duties of which, you are sensible, are as laborious as those of any office under Government, if not more so; and I believe I can add, without deviating from the truth, that I have attended my appointment with fidelity and honesty; for a confirmation of which I appeal to my brethren in the Office. The earnest desire I had to do my duty to God as well as to man, led me to search minutely into religion; and my endeavours strictly to observe that duty will not, I trust, be the means of criminating me. My refusal to take an oath I really believe, is built on a sure and solid foundation. I have therefore to entreat you to represent my case as it really is, to the Postmasters-general: and as matters of conscience have ever been considered by true Christians to be of a very delicate and tender nature, I cannot but hope they will look kindly rather than harshly on my conduct. The duty I at present fulfil, has very little connexion with

any other part of the Office; consequently I shall not be subject to the inconvenience I have lately experienced; and if I may be indulged by being allowed to remain in this employ, I shall think myself amply remunerated, and will give up the prospect of future advancement. If, however, the Postmasters-general are not willing to grant me this favour, I have only to beg that, as there have been precedents of persons resigning and receiving an annual stipend from the Office, they will be pleased to grant me the like indulgence. I am, with respect, your obliged friend,

FREDERICK SMITH.

In a few days I was ordered to attend the Board; and though the Postmasters-general appeared more mild than they had done, yet I met with no success from my application. I was told I should not be immediately dismissed, as I had represented how I was circumstanced in other matters, but that I should have liberty to attend the Office as usual for two or three weeks, till I could turn myself about. But I was much surprised and disappointed the next morning, when on entering the Office, I was told that it was the express order of the Postmasters-general that I should not do any more duty; and I was refused even the indulgence of going to my drawer. This appeared the hardest of all my trials. It was unexpected; and I could not but sit down in my room and weep aloud. I was informed that orders were also given to insist upon every person in the Post Office taking the sacrament, so called; at which I was not surprised; for in my hearing, one of the Postmasters-general in a violent passion, and swearing vehemently, asked if there were any more men

who thought as I did; declaring if there were, they should all turn out. Endeavours were used to make me appear criminal and worthy the treatment I received; and to give the greater appearance of justice to their proceedings, they reported that the judge at the Assizes had said in open court, that I was a man very unfit for any employment in the Post Office, and that he intended informing the Postmasters-general as much; which was altogether untrue, nothing of the sort having transpired; but on the contrary, the judge behaved with much tenderness and feeling towards me.

Seeing how involved in difficulties we were, my opening this matter to my wife was a severe trial to me; and none but the Almighty could conceive the inward distress I suffered on being brought into this humiliating situation. I had now scarcely a friend to whom I could open my mind; and my father and other relations treated me with coldness, especially the former, who declared he would never do any thing for me. None offered me any assistance, and I dared not open my situation to Friends, lest they should suppose I courted the Society for gain. My wife too, (who was violently opposed to Friends,) perhaps with a view of forcing me to return to my former way of thinking, appeared uncommonly bitter against me; so much so, that in the hurry of her resentment she left the house, with the determination, as she said, never to return, and took the children with her. I entreated her before she left, not to prosecute her intention; nor did I expect she would, till she put it in execution. She was at a relative's at Richmond for some time; and while she was there I wrote to her in as moving a manner as I was capable, to request her to return. She came afterwards to get clothes

for herself and the children, when I renewed my entreaties with many tears, but in vain. In this season of distress, the love of God through Christ was my only comfort, and in this I felt experimentally that I was not forsaken by Him for whom I suffered such severe trials and conflicts. Under the pressure of them I wrote as follows:—"My brethren are put far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house count me for a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body. All my friends abhorred me; and they whom I loved are turned against me. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness. But I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

After an absence of several weeks my wife returned to me; and I can truly say, I received her joyfully. During the time of these deep probations, I was also under great discouragement respecting my outward affairs. When I had been in business about a year, on making up my accounts I found my debts exceeded my property by upwards of £1000; and the next year there appeared but little improvement; for in these two years my business did not clear my expenses by about £300 a year.

In the beginning of the year 1785, I was kindly noticed by a few Friends, whose society I very much enjoyed, home being generally very unpleasant to me. In the First Month of this year George Dillwyn and Samuel Emlen, who were visiting the families of Friends of Westminster Meeting, expressed an

inclination to sit with me; and I met them for that purpose at George Stacey's. I felt in an unusually disconsolate state, and unable to see anything but the impurity of my heart. The subject of their testimony was to encourage faithfulness in little acts of dedication that were required of me; intimating I was not to suppose that, because I had suffered for the cause of truth, the work was done; that there was still a great deal to do, and perhaps to suffer; and that it is only by patience and watchfulness, and keeping the eye single to the great Master, that we can be safe; that seeing we are weak and insufficient of ourselves to do any thing to His glory, we must seek for ability to serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind, that by the purity of our conduct we may prove ourselves worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. The upright, honest dealing of these Friends, was a stimulus to me to press through every difficulty and discouragement.

The adoption of the plain language was a great trial to me, and it was a long time before I could fully give up to it; and even after I had accomplished it, and had continued faithful for some weeks, my strength failed me, and I nearly gave it up: but by attending to the secret reproofs of instruction, I was favoured with strength to resume this part of my duty; though I found it much more difficult to return, than it was in the first instance to conform to the practice. Thus by unwatchfulness, and not attending to the pointings of duty in what appeared little things, I was frequently brought into much distress; but when faithful to the voice of Truth, I was at times favoured with great peace and comfort, and found I gained strength in the holy warfare. Though neither dress nor address at first appeared of

much importance to me, yet as I faithfully yielded to the teaching influences of Divine grace and truth, I was enabled to see the beneficial effects of supporting these parts of our testimony. When I first altered my dress, the tailor, contrary to my directions, made my coat with a cape and cross pockets. The cape I had altered, but as the alteration of the pockets would have disfigured the coat, I retained them, though it cost me considerable uneasiness. By this little exercise I was put to the test, whether my alteration was from principle, or merely an act of conformity to the customs of Friends, which I have always thought a matter of no small importance: for to get into the fold by any other way than by the door, or following any other leader than the true Shepherd, I believe is unsafe; and however desirable it may be to conform to the views and practices of our brethren, this is not sufficient to build a religious scruple upon.

My natural disposition was volatile and lively; at the same time I was hasty and impatient of contradiction. I scarcely seemed able at times to keep my vivacity within due bounds, which was often a great trouble to me. I therefore abstained from animal food, &c., thinking that by mortifying the body, I should be able to conquer this enemy to my peace, as well as others by which I was assailed. This voluntary abstinence caused me much distress; being unable to give a substantial reason when I was questioned upon the subject by my wife and others. I continued in this course for some months, till my natural strength was much reduced; but my animal spirits were greatly increased, and I thus discovered that all human means, not in the Divine economy, are insufficient to bring about the work of regenera-

tion ; nothing short of the light and power of Jesus Christ being able to effect this great and important work. For many months I had to travel on under the pressure of outward discouragements, so much so that there was little appearance of my getting forward in business : though at some times the prospect was more cheering than at others. Keen was the distress that I suffered, and many the tears that I shed. I had also a host of enemies within, whereby I was kept in a state of continued warfare ; fearful lest I should not be able to stand my ground, and after all my sufferings, bring reproach on the Truth.

My dear wife was all this time unable to comprehend the meaning of the peculiarity of my conduct, by which we had been brought into these circumstances of difficulty ; and not being reconciled thereto, she frequently upbraided me. This was a cause of great disquiet to us both ; and it is likely my yielding to the natural warmth of my temper, made my own path considerably more trying than it would have been, had I borne with patience the contradictions I met with. I did indeed strive to get the better of this evil ; and Oh, the distress and agony which I have sometimes felt, when under the influence of it ! My wife, who formerly was all mildness and meekness, was now an altered woman, having become severe, contentious and vindictive, displeased with every thing I did, and indisposed to please me : and thus we were at this time completely alienated from each other. But alas ! I ought to have shown a greater degree of condescension, and to have been more like the Master, who when he was reviled, reviled not again.

On account of my wife's forbidding and distant behaviour towards Friends, I seldom had any to call on me, which I thought hard. Sometimes, indeed,

they pressed through all; and, as they kept their places, their visits generally ended well. It happened once that Timothy Bevington and John Burlingham of Worcester were on business in the neighbourhood; and though unacquainted with me, they agreed to call on me, and accepted an invitation to dinner. After dinner, with much difficulty, on account of my wife's objection to stillness, a religious opportunity was obtained; wherein T. B. gave us some excellent advice, and at the same time told me he had an assurance that if I kept my place, my wife would be given to me; an occurrence I could at that time have no prospect of, nor had I faith to believe it.

I had been a constant attender of meetings; and sometimes when I had occasion to go into the city, I took the opportunity of attending one of the meetings there. One day, having business in the city, I intended to go to the meeting in White Hart Court. In passing along Holborn I saw a poor woman apparently in great misery and distress, the effects, perhaps, of a life of dissipation. I felt an involuntary sympathy for the poor creature, but passed on. She, however, took such hold of me, that my mind became agitated, and I was for a time withheld, as it were, from going any farther. I accordingly stopped and endeavoured to compose my mind, having never felt any thing of the sort before. I soon had an evident impression to go back, attended with these words, "obedience is better than sacrifice." I continued for some time undetermined what to do. Time seemed to call for some conclusion, lest I should be too late for meeting. I could not, however, give up to go back; many weak reasons coming in the way; I therefore proceeded under a full conviction of disobedience.

After I had been seated in meeting for some time, my mind became tranquil; and I felt sufficient life in me to pray for strength and a willing heart, whenever the Lord might be pleased again to call me into service. In the midst of my cogitations, George Dillwyn in a singular manner pointed out the consequences of a neglect of duty when it became clearly shown to us, which he said was the case, he believed, with a state then present; who, though they had known a being led into the wilderness, if a repetition of disobedience were to take place, must not be surprised if they experienced a continuing much longer there than the Master ever intended; and admonished those present to beware of this, and press forward to the mark, &c. I was much humbled at this testimony, seeing that I could not hide myself in a corner. Surely it is a glorious privilege to be led out of the labyrinth of self-will, by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob. These circumstances made a deep impression on my mind, and I trembled at disobedience.

About this time I had an extraordinary dream, which I could not at first well understand the meaning of; the natural man could not comprehend it, though afterwards I was made sensible that it was of no common interpretation.

I thought I was alone upon an open heath or common, where it thundered and lightened very much; the atmosphere appeared illuminated with the dreadful flashes that seemed to surround me on all sides; there appeared no way for me to escape. I thought every moment, the next flash would destroy me. In the midst of my distress I observed that the lightning had set fire to a town at some distance from me, and as near as I could judge, destroyed about a third of it. I now expected my dissolution was near, but

I was much surprised and consoled by hearing a voice from above, directed to myself to this purpose, "Fear not, but be thou faithful, and none of these things shall happen unto thee; but unto every town, and even village in this kingdom, thus shall it be." I soon awoke under an awful sense of the merciful preservation I thought I had experienced, and an extraordinary dread was upon my mind for some time afterwards. At first I was ready to conclude that this country would be visited with some dreadful calamity, but afterwards I was led to believe it concerned myself alone, and that faithfulness would be my preservation under the many trials and difficulties which seemed to surround me.

Although I was so much oppressed as above represented, yet there were seasons of sweet enjoyment permitted me, wherein my cup might be said to run over: for days and nights together I have been almost lost in the excess of heavenly love, and [at times] dared not stir lest it should be removed from me. Thus was I led on through various dispensations; during which I could not but admire and adore the gracious Hand that was thus mercifully conducting me.

About the year 1786, several things occurred which evidenced the care of the Good Shepherd towards me, a poor worm. He, in mercy, saw meet to disclose himself to me, and by the might of his own power manifested that he was able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham, if I did not reject so great salvation. I had still great difficulties to struggle with, and had none to look to for help but the blessed Redeemer; the Lord alone was my support. The difficulties we were under produced great humiliation: the creature of necessity was to be reduced:

not a stone of the former building was to remain; all was to be razed, that the wise Master-Builder might erect his temple in the heart, Jesus Christ being the chief-corner-stone.

[The writer, after stating that himself and wife had in their prosperity enjoyed many outward comforts; that now in their reduced condition, duty and necessity combined to induce them to make sacrifices which by some would have been considered costly; and that among other things, a sideboard of plate was disposed of, proceeds:—] To be thus reduced was no small trial to flesh and blood, but the plate was called for, and it was given up. In our straitened circumstances it would have been folly to purchase it; and now possessing comparatively nothing, vanity alone could be the inducement for keeping it.

This year my business increased: on taking stock, I found I had just about enough to pay all my creditors twenty shillings in the pound. Such being the case, I thought I would not again run the hazard of causing any person to lose by me, unless with his own consent. I therefore, upon mature deliberation, came to the humiliating conclusion to call my principal creditors together, in order to acquaint them with the exact state of my affairs, and to offer to give up my property to them if they chose to accept it; but that if they were willing to let me go on in business, I intended to avail myself of their kindness.

One day while at dinner, pondering this subject in my mind, and bewailing the trying circumstances to which I was reduced, I was so overcome by my feelings that I burst into tears, (my family being all around me,) and mentally poured out my soul to my Heavenly Father. While in this humble situation of

mind, a letter, per post, was delivered to me: it was from a person of property who had married a relative of my wife's, and was to this effect:—

"Sir:—I have made my will and have left your wife £——; but believing it may be of more use to you now, than it may be at my death, you are at liberty to draw upon me at sight. I am, Sir, your humble servant," &c.

The person lived at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; his wife was dead. I had never seen him nor corresponded with him, and my wife had only seen him when she was a child; so that we could have no expectation of any such communication from him. This sum was sufficient to enable me to carry on my business without risk to my creditors; and my poor, tried soul was bowed in humble gratitude [to my Heavenly Father], for having thus manifested his loving-kindness towards me, and confirmed the everlasting truth, that "for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, he would arise." Surely this was a memorable token of his fatherly care over his children. I was sensible that there was none in heaven but Him, nor in all the earth, that I could depend upon but Him; to Him alone I wished to render all the praise.

The time now came that Friends began to look towards my being received into membership; and I understood afterwards, that some difficulty had arisen, on account of my not having applied to the Monthly Meeting for admission. This was, however, soon got over, as in the course of conversation with some Friends, the question was put to me, whether I had ever looked towards the Society with a desire to be more nearly united to it? I very readily answered in the affirmative, adding, that I did not feel the same anxiety respecting it that I once did, being

willing to wait the Lord's time in this, as well as in every other occurrence of my life; and left it entirely to them to mention it to the meeting. I was soon after this visited, by appointment of the Monthly Meeting, by a committee of, I believe, judicious Friends, who were not willing to take things by outward appearance only; for I believe I thought quite highly enough of myself, and supposed I had made considerable progress in religious experience. But the first visit convinced me of my error; and I was much humbled under a sense of my own emptiness and want of all things. I remained much exercised till the Friends had another opportunity with me; when to myself I appeared much darker than before, and according to my own feelings, in no situation to be received into membership. I was also much deserted, and tried with many close inward conflicts; and as the Friends gave me little or no encouragement, I apprehended I was now entirely lost, being, as I thought, shut out from the blessed unity of the Spirit, both with the Almighty, and my beloved friends. Great was my distress and searching of heart at this season of deep humiliation; here self was in no estimation. I often thought the pain and exercise I had to pass through was more than I could well bear for a continuance, and seriously feared the effects of my present trouble. In the midst of this close trial, on the Sixth-day previous to the Yearly Meeting, I was informed by a Friend that the Monthly Meeting had acknowledged me as a member, and that I was therefore at liberty to attend the Yearly Meeting. I cannot express the joy I felt, and the favour I considered it, to be united to that body with whom I had so long felt a union; and great were my cries that I might know preservation

from evil, and not be permitted to bring reproach on the ever-blessed Truth. I have often, on looking back, had to admire the goodness of the Almighty to my poor soul, in suffering this dispensation, and that I was not admitted into the Society in a superficial manner, nor made to think myself better than I was; but that wise and feeling brethren were sent to examine and feel for themselves and the meeting.

A circumstance occurred during the Yearly Meeting, which led me to consider the nature of appointments to services in the church, and the manner of their being made. The nomination of Friends to their rightly allotted services, has appeared to me to be a matter of great importance; and that those who nominate should do it under a feeling of its propriety, rather than from the apparent qualification or ability of the individual, or a partiality for him; remembering that He who alone can rightly qualify, often sees meet to dispense the gift to the meanest instrument, that thereby his name may be more eminently glorified: and that unless we wait upon him for a right influence, his work may be marred in our hands, as I fear is often the case, by the officiousness of forward and unskilful spirits, who are more earnest to maintain an authority in the church, than to submit to be led by Him, whose ways are in the deeps. The hasty refusal of Friends to accept appointments, when perhaps the nomination has arisen from a weighty impression as to the fitness of the individual named, has appeared of equal importance. Some refuse through diffidence; others, from not having felt anything towards the service; and too many from an unwillingness to give up their time for the service of Truth, the things of this world standing too much in

the way. To the diffident I would say, that they should recollect, the work, if rightly entered into, is not theirs but the Master's, "who putteth forth his own, and goeth before them." The same may be said to those who have felt nothing towards the service to which they are nominated; and that if they do not feel anything against the appointment, it is better to accept it, because by going blindfold to the work, with their dependence wholly on the Good Shepherd for help and guidance, they will probably be enabled to do it more to his honour, than if they had a clear sight beforehand. As to those who grudge the time that the Master's business requires, the little experience I have had has shown me, that such as these have almost imperceptibly dwindled to nothing, as to the substantial part of religion, and have degenerated to mere lifeless formalists; according as it was said of those who lusted after things that were not convenient for them; "He gave them their desire, but sent leanness into their souls."

Although my dear wife and myself were not yet so united as I could have wished, yet there appeared some ground gained. I have already stated that Timothy Bevington, in a religious opportunity, spoke encouragingly to us. Some months afterwards, on meeting him again, he told me he recollected what had come before his mind at that time; and though what he had said was not yet realized, he notwithstanding had a renewed belief that "my wife would be given to me." I had been very cautious at all times of saying anything by way of persuasion as to my wife's religious movements, except that I sometimes urged her to the attendance of her own place of worship. Indeed, I was satisfied that it would answer little purpose, unless I could feel myself warranted to

press anything on her from the influence of Divine love, which I thought I might at some time be favoured to feel. Her health was often very indifferent; the air of London did not suit her, so that we had, for a considerable time, been under the necessity of having a lodging out of town, where she frequently remained for several days together when she was unwell. This was the case near the latter end of this year, and I was left in town. One day, while serving a customer in the shop, I felt the sweet influence of heavenly love in a remarkable degree, and at the same time, such a powerful union with my dear wife, that I was overcome with the sensation: and having dismissed the customer as speedily as I could, I went upstairs to give vent to my feelings, where I continued the greater part of the day. Under this influence I felt an inclination either to speak or write to her, on the subject of a nearer religious fellowship. I was not, however, in haste to put it in practice, but waited till the next day, that I might, when my mind became more settled, judge of the propriety of such a step. The next day, on sitting down before Him by whom I wished to be rightly instructed, I again felt the same sweet impression; when, without hesitation, I wrote a few lines to her, expressive of what I felt. I took the letter that evening, and soon found that the Master had been there before me. She read what I had written several times over, but said nothing. After a time, I ventured to begin the conversation, though in much fear and brokenness, and I told her all that I had felt. She was much affected at the relation, and asked me at what time of the preceding day it was, that I felt the impression I spoke of; I replied, that the clock struck eleven as I was going upstairs, on leaving the

shop. She said it was very remarkable, for just at that time she felt the same impression towards me, which had continued with her ever since, much to her comfort and consolation. We now mingled our tears of real joy together, under a sense of the gracious dealings of our Heavenly Father to our poor souls; and we had to admire that our present union had not been effected by any human means, but by the power of the Lord alone, *He having given my wife to me.* Great, I believe, were our desires that we might in no respect know a separation from each other, but that we might so walk before Him as to experience a continuance of his love and regard. I believe we both considered this extraordinary manifestation of Divine love, through which we were so sweetly united, as our spiritual marriage; for what we had before known of love, fell far short of that which we now felt towards each other—nay, appeared as nothing in comparison of it. This, I apprehend, is what all ought to feel on entering into this solemn engagement.

My wife was at this time very much indisposed, and had to endure a great deal of pain, so that she was often ready to cry out from the agony she suffered; but she was at the same time, under a very precious visitation; for in the midst of her suffering she felt such a flow of Divine comfort, as made her bodily affliction appear as nothing to her; and, as she has frequently told me since, she was at times ready to pray for a return of her pains, in the hope of being favoured with a return of heavenly love and consolation.

About this time, as she informed me several years afterwards, she had a singular dream, which, as it conveys instruction, I shall here relate.—

She thought that as she and her brother were walking together, they came to a large flight of stairs, which she ventured to ascend, but left her brother at the bottom. When she had reached the top, she saw two angels in white raiment, each having a trumpet, which they placed to their mouth, and said with loud voices, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." They then led her forward amidst an innumerable company of angels, where the sweet sensation she felt was beyond description. They afterwards brought her back again and down the stairs. She wished to return with them, but they pointed to two roads; the one on the left hand was a large open and beautiful plain, that on the right a rugged and narrow path. She was told she had her choice which way to go, but if she intended to come thither again, it must be by going along the rugged and narrow way. They then left her, and she soon afterwards awoke. The next First-day, she went to her usual place of worship, when the minister took for his text the words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This brought her dream afresh to her remembrance, and it seemed to have the effect of making her more earnest to know which way it was her duty to go. After a time, she found most peace in going with me. I left her entirely to herself as to her attending Friends' meetings, being satisfied that He who had visited our souls in so extraordinary a manner, would in the right time, carry on the work he had begun in her. In a few weeks after she had got better, she gradually left her former place of worship, and we soon had the satisfaction of experiencing "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It was no small alleviation of my troubles to have the help of my dear wife; the union of her spirit was a

great comfort to me. She kept her place, I have often thought, far beyond myself, and afterwards became a steady and useful member of the Society of Friends.

My business was now gradually increasing, and I had a good hope that I should not continue to suffer the severe discipline which I had experienced on account of trade; a prospect appeared of my getting out of some of the difficulties I had been struggling against. For these and many other blessings, my heart was often bowed in reverence to God. My trials had the effect of enabling me, from experience, to sympathize with the afflicted. With my mind thus tenderly exercised on behalf of a near relation, (the daughter of an uncle, a clergyman,) with whom I had formerly been on terms of great friendship, I wrote the following letter to her :—

Haymarket, Ninth Month 4th, 1786.

Dear Cousin,

With that tenderness and sympathy, which I can with truth say, I often feel for the afflictions of my fellow-creatures, and which at this time I sensibly feel for thee, do I now sit down to offer my mite of love towards thee. Believe me, the account of thy dear husband's decease gave me much heartfelt uneasiness, well knowing the afflictive dispensation now laid upon thee, must cause sensations which cannot be easily described. But trials of this kind, my dear cousin, we must all submit to; nay, we must not even murmur at them. It is the Lord's will, and who can controvert it? Our giving way to grief will in no wise answer any good purpose, but may perhaps encourage a melancholy which it is our duty to avoid. We should endeavour to say in sincerity, "Not my

will, but thine be done, O Lord!" It has pleased the Almighty oftentimes to bring me low; and I have observed, that in seasons of distress, my soul has been brought nearer to him; thus I have been enabled to cry mightily unto him, and I have ever found him a present Helper in all my afflictions. Therefore, my dear cousin, I would have thee consider that the Lord is never nearer than in seasons of trial and deep probation. At these times, we feel our souls drawn towards him, knowing our own inability to help ourselves, with the anxious hope that he will not utterly cast us from his presence. Trials and afflictions are sometimes as needful for the mind, as food for the body. I have often thought, yea, I have experienced it, that a religious growth, and a true knowledge of God, has been more fully known by patience and resignation to his blessed will in time of deep suffering. When we are thus willingly led, we find him to be the Physician of great price, the Healer of our wounds and the hope of our salvation. But alas! there are few that can truly say, "a Saviour or I die, a Redeemer or I perish!" And what is the reason? We are not willing to undergo the refining operation of his hand. "As gold is tried in the fire, so are acceptable men in the furnace of affliction." Those whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; therefore let us keep in his love by submission to his will. "Wo unto them who have lost patience! for what will they do when the Lord cometh." Happy wilt thou be, my dear cousin, if thou look to him alone for help; then he will never desert thee; but the more thou castest thy care on him, the more he will manifest himself unto thee. Think not thy present affliction is more than thou canst bear. Remember David's resignation and faith; and if thou take his example,

thou wilt in thy distress, have to say as he did, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." Humble thyself before him, and I have not a doubt but that thou wilt yet have occasion to rejoice.

I think I have little more to add, than if I can in any respect assist thee, my dear cousin, I shall be happy to do so; therefore do not let a fear of giving trouble be a motive for not [asking my aid.] I therefore conclude, sincerely desiring that the Almighty may look with tenderness and compassionate regard upon thee, and that thou mayst be preserved in his love in this season of severe distress.

Thy affectionate cousin,

FREDERICK SMITH.

The path which I had to tread seemed different from that into which many others had been introduced; but it was one, to the trials whereof, after struggling for a time, I was generally obliged to submit: this led me to feel for other fellow-travellers in the strait and narrow way, whose exercises were different from those of many who had obtained their religion by education. In some of the Meetings for Discipline which I attended, I was brought very low, by observing the off-hand way in which some who had not been baptized through suffering, conducted the affairs of the church; and I also had silently to mourn over those who, as delinquents, had become the objects of the discipline; having often to look back at my own state, when in bondage and captivity in the days of my youth; the recollection of which I considered as a great favour, being thus preserved from thinking

too highly of myself, or from a disposition to say, "I am holier than thou." The narrow path into which I was led, occasioned Friends to exercise a tender care over me; those of more experience than myself, watched over me for good, lest the enemy might deceive me by some of his transformations, which he usually attempts in the early days of the espousals of the Lord's children. The goodness of the Lord is great; and sometimes his visitations are marvellous, beyond the comprehension of man. Such has been his condescension, that I have been instructed in the night season, at times when I have been ready to faint, and when human help seemed unavailable. How shall I recount his loving-kindness during the travail of my soul!

I suffered sore conflict from a fear of having mistaken an apprehended duty; more especially as some of my friends had queried with me, whether this had not been the case; for though I could not see that I was in error, yet I was not certain that it was not so. Whilst in this situation, my mind was much tossed, and I had the following dream:—

I thought I was with some Friends with whom I was particularly intimate. They were viewing a newly-erected building which seemed to them to want a little repair; and just as I was about to give an opinion, I was secretly told I had nothing to do with that matter, my business was to keep the right-hand road; and upon looking about, I observed there were two roads before me, the one on the left seemed broad and pleasant, that on the right was very narrow and rugged, which latter I took. It was with some difficulty I could get along; but after labouring for some time, I got to the end of this narrow way, and came to a pleasant green field. As

soon as I entered this open space, my mind was so overcome with the enjoyment of Divine love, that I burst into a flood of tears. O! the love I felt to the Almighty, is beyond expression. I inquired the name of the place where I was, and was answered, "It is Heaven." I remained under this sweet impression of heavenly enjoyment for a considerable time; and when I awoke, I continued praising God for his goodness to my soul, the rest of the night. I was instructed to believe, that the newly-erected house, which my friends apprehended wanted a little help, was myself, but that I was to hear, and not contend; that I was steadily to follow my Guide, and he would lead me into the right path, and my reward should be sure.

I apprehended there were few who had to endure greater conflicts than myself; yet there were times wherein my gracious Master was pleased to favour me with his life-giving presence; and although I was still in my infancy as to religion, I could discern the states of others: but I kept these things much to myself. As Mary did, "I pondered these things in my heart," thinking it not right to disclose the King's secrets. I thought it was not improbable, that at some time I should be called to the ministry; having at seasons to wade as through the rubbish. This the exercised traveller is not unfrequently obliged to do, before he can reap the reward of his labours. I was at times, ready to cry out to those who were standing in the way, and were not only idle themselves, but hindered those who were anxious to do the Master's work. I was not, however, hasty in this matter, the time not being fully come. I believe I sometimes heard the Shepherd's voice, although like Samuel I did not then fully know from whence it proceeded.

Among the occasions of my spiritual conflict, was a temptation to infidelity; this sore trial was altogether sudden and unexpected. I was one day looking over a Review, and read a short sentence, which was an extract from the work of a deistical writer. It was like an arrow which made a deep wound in a vital part. I instantly became beclouded with doubts, and so distressed that I knew not what to do. I thought all I had been building up was in vain, and that there was no certainty as to the christian principle. I felt it was an attempt of the enemy to ensnare me, and was permitted for a season to doubt. I dared not open my mind to any one on the subject, lest it should be suspected that I was not sound in the faith. Thus I was brought to a full dependence on the Lord alone for help, believing that he only could cure the wound which had thus been received. I endeavoured to keep my mind as quiet and easy as I could, trusting that the mystery would, in the right time, be unfolded. I was six weeks under this exercise: great were my cries to the alone Helper, and he heard me. Being at a meeting at Hammersmith, the Master saw meet to open my understanding, so that those things which had disturbed my peace, became clear and beyond all doubt; and towards the close of the meeting, I had an evidence given me, that what was now opened to my view, was not exclusively for my own individual instruction; but that there was a state then present, who had drank large draughts of infidelity. I had not, however, strength to open my mouth in the meeting. Towards the close, a Friend expressed somewhat in the line I had been exercised in, which in some degree relieved me. On my return to London with a Friend, I mentioned the apprehension I had, respecting the state

above-mentioned; he informed me I was right, there having been a Unitarian preacher present during the whole of the meeting.

The close of the year 1788 was a time of great exercise to my mind; and I experienced the buffetings of Satan in various ways. I was, notwithstanding, desirous under all, to attend to the secret instructions of my holy Leader; and great were my cries, that I might not be permitted to fall, or be led into error; so that my attention seemed much fixed, even as to my outward movements, to know his voice. One First-day morning, I had an impression, although so gentle as scarcely to be perceived, that it would be right for me to go to Hammersmith Meeting, which began at eleven o'clock. I could hardly come to a determination, when the clock struck ten. There was now no time to spare, the distance to Hammersmith being five miles; so I even concluded to go there, and walked very fast. When I came to the wall beyond Knightsbridge, a man joined me, and walked beside me without saying a word: we both turned in to the meeting-house. It was a precious meeting, and when it concluded, I hastened back and attended Westminster Meeting, which began at two o'clock. On my return, the same man joined me again; and all the conversation that passed between us was—I asked him, "Whether he had been among the Methodists?" to which he replied, "Yes." We walked on together for some distance, but he could not keep up with me. Some weeks after this, I observed him come into Westminster Meeting, and sit down very solidly. He came again in the afternoon, and continued to attend meetings on First-days for some weeks; after which I told him we met on Fifth-day mornings also; whereupon he became

a regular attender of our mid-week meetings. After a time, I took some further notice of him; and he once told me, that having become much dissatisfied with continuing with the Methodists, he had, on the day we walked together to Hammersmith, gone out with a view of observing which way Providence would lead him, and whichever way that should [appear to be], he meant to try it; and if he could be easy therein, to follow it: that seeing me walking very fast, he concluded I was going to some meeting, and he determined to follow me: that he felt so much peace whilst in meeting, that he believed it would be right for him to give up to attend our meetings, which he could not at first do. But when he saw me, (as, being resident in my neighbourhood, he often did,) his conscience struck him for his cowardice; and at last he was obliged to come and sit with us. He was a solid man, and was afterwards received as a member among us. I record this, to show the necessity of ever attending to the tender feelings of the mind, and of taking care not to throw them hastily by, without giving them due consideration.

Although the following account may not be considered as a part of my Memoirs, yet as it has afforded me instruction, I shall here narrate it.—J. C. was a person, who in the early part of his life resided at Bristol, but afterwards near London. He had been disunited from the Society of Friends for several years, but occasionally attended Friends' meetings. For a year or two past, he had become attached to myself and family, though on the whole not much so to Friends as a Society. He was at this time more than ninety years of age. One evening he came to drink tea with us, and in conversation, alluding to a young man who was of our company, he said, "I

remember the time when I was as plain a Friend as he is;" and went on to inform us, that when he was a youth, though his parents were gay, and very little of Friends in appearance or otherwise, yet himself was seriously inclined, regularly attended our religious meetings, was particular in his attention to the plain language, also in his dress, and in keeping his father's books according to the practice of Friends, as to the names of the days and months. When he was about twenty-one years of age, as he was sitting very solidly in meeting, and under a close exercise of mind, he apprehended himself called upon to say a few words in the line of the ministry, which through weakness and fear he neglected to do. He had the same impression on his mind at several meetings afterwards, to which he uniformly neglected to attend; and at last determined never to expose himself in that way. The frequency of this impression, and the distress of his mind on account of his refusal to attend to it, at last had a sensible effect on his bodily health; which being observed by his father, he requested a physician who was intimate with the family, to find out what his complaint was, and to prescribe for him. This he attempted; but finding medicine to be of no use, he told his father he believed his complaint was out of its reach, and that he apprehended his disease was on the mind; adding, that if he could discover the occasion of his distress, it might lead to a means of relief. Accordingly his father, in a very affectionate manner, told him what his apprehensions were; and withal, that as he knew he tenderly loved him, if he would let him know the cause of the melancholy which seemed to oppress him, he might depend on his doing all in his power, as a parent, to make him happy. After urging him

for some time, he confessed that it arose from disobedience to revealed duty, as above related; and that now all power to do the Divine will was taken away, so that his life was become miserable. His father urged him to comply with the holy requisition; but he told him it was now too late, he had done violence to his best feelings, and that he should never have a visitation of the like kind any more. His father again consulted the physician, who advised him to send his son to some distance from his friends, which was speedily done; and his father gave him the superintendence and management of some mines in Wales. Here the tendering impressions of religion were soon lost; and instead of them, he had a settled gloom and continued distress of mind, so that many times he feared his senses would become affected. He said he remained for twenty years together in this state truly afflicted; and though at the end of this time he seemed to get over these unhappy feelings, yet they frequently returned for years together, during his long life. He added, that possessing a good understanding, he had a turn for mineralogy and chemistry; and was considered superior to most in his day, having made many improvements in these sciences; and that other persons had richly reaped of the fruit of his labours, but that everything, as to himself, had failed of success. A blast had overtaken all his endeavours; and though never extravagant in his own expenses, he became reduced in his circumstances, and was now literally living on the bounty of others. He was taken ill when nearly a hundred years old, and during his illness showed no marks of religious sensibility.

In the year 1789, I was tried various ways: I was

much tempted, experienced much spiritual desertion, and felt keen distress for the loss of the beloved of my soul: but there was an Arm underneath which supported, and under every temptation a way was made for my escape: adorable condescension! Every token of friendship, every act of kindness from my brethren appeared to be more than I deserved. I became in my own view, as the off-scouring of the earth. During these close exercises and deep baptisms, my soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and I had no idea of what was to follow them. He who knows how to prepare and qualify his servants, is pleased to do it in his own way; not according to the weak apprehension of his creature man. He causes his children experimentally to know, that his strength is made perfect in weakness, and that his grace is sufficient for them.

Very early one First-day morning, I felt an impression that I must go to Ratcliffe Meeting. I would have put it by, and endeavoured to reason it away; but I was at last obliged to submit. Soon after I got there, very unexpectedly, John Pemberton and James Thornton came into the meeting. About an hour after the meeting was gathered, I felt an uncommon exercise, and afterwards a secret impulse to engage in vocal supplication. O, the awful distress which I felt! I was naturally averse to speaking in public, often experiencing it to be a great difficulty in our own Monthly Meeting. After waiting a considerable time in great conflict of spirit, apprehending myself so abundantly weak, and every way unworthy and unqualified for so important an undertaking, I suffered the meeting to break up, without performing what appeared to be my duty. Great was my distress and agony for this act of disobedience, even such

as is not to be described. The two Friends above-named asked me to go with them to the Friend's house where they were to dine, which I did; and dear John Pemberton, perceiving all was not right, asked me the reason, which I was not easy to inform him, and put it by. I thought notwithstanding, if ever I should be thus called on again, I would endeavour not to refuse, and in the afternoon, waited to feel an impulse of the same kind; but the Lord's time is not our time. After the meeting was over, I went with J. P. and J. T. to a Friend's house at Bromley; and after tea, in a religious opportunity there, I felt the exercise and the command; and after much severe conflict, I gave up to express a few words in supplication. After the agitation was over, I became still and quiet, and humbly thankful that the Lord in mercy had accepted this small sacrifice from a rebellious heart. My kind friends J. P. and J. T. expressed their unity with me, and comforted me under my present exercise, as we walked from the Friend's house. I returned home sweetly rejoicing, having seen of the long travail of my soul and become satisfied. This was on the 28th of the Sixth Month, 1789, the day on which I was thirty-two years of age. Those only who have entered into this service from the necessity alone, after having been made willing through suffering to become anything or nothing, can form any true judgment of its awfulness; at least it so appeared to me, under the varied baptisms I had been plunged into, in order to be prepared for this engagement. To a diffident mind, and one who had at times experienced much Divine favour, it was a sore trial thus to expose myself, and become a preacher of righteousness to others. I was humbled as in the dust, and tears were my meat day and night for a season.

At our Quarterly Meeting in the Ninth Month, I became much exercised, and in the early part of the meeting, I felt it to be my duty to open my mouth in supplication ; but I endeavoured to put it by, till near the time for breaking up the meeting, when I fell on my knees, and stammered out a few words. Although this produced peace to my own mind, as the result of giving up to apparent duty, yet I have since thought, with respect to such cases, where weakness has thus got in, and the right time for offering the sacrifice has passed by, it might be profitable to consider, whether it is not better to bear our own burden, rather than to offer unseasonably in a solid meeting ; yet this is a weighty matter, and ought not hastily to be decided on. It must be confessed, that when the true order is maintained, and every one moves in his proper place, the regular line of the ministry is beautiful, the harmony of the gospel is preciously felt, and the Lord is glorified. It is likely my beloved friend James Thornton apprehended I had let in some discouragement, and therefore, in order to reconcile me to my apparent hard service, he told me he had good unity with me therein, and especially on that day ; and with other weighty and truly fatherly counsel, he told me I must not expect a smooth path ; adding, "I believe thou wilt have many instructors, but few fathers, so be prepared like a valiant soldier, to endure hardness in the Lord's battles."

Whilst J. Pemberton and J. Thornton were in London, we had the satisfaction of having much of their company ; the former frequently lodged at our house. He was a man of an affectionate and kind disposition, with great humility, and a most benevolent mind. I understood that in his visit to Ireland,

he expended among the poor of that nation, more than a thousand pounds. Whilst travelling through Scotland, he was equally liberal to the poor of that country; and finding, in his visit to the northern islands, that the inhabitants had nothing to eat but dried fish, when he returned into Scotland, he loaded a vessel with meal, as a present to these poor islanders.

Whilst at Lincoln, in company with Thomas Ross, also from America, and some other Friends, John Pemberton had a particular wish to have a meeting with the soldiers that were quartered there; and application being made to some of the officers for leave, it was refused. This produced great exercise of mind to J. P., so that he could get no rest; nor could he leave the place, much to the mortification of Thomas Ross, who wanted to be moving forward. At last as he was laying on the bed, it came into his mind to make inquiry whether the commander of the regiment was in the city. This being done, it was discovered that he was. J. P. then said he would go to him himself. When he got to the house where he was, he sent up his name and added "from Philadelphia." The General desired Mr. Pemberton might be told to walk in. On entering the room the General rose up to meet him, and in the most affectionate manner asked after his health, expressing the great satisfaction he felt at meeting with him in England, and inquired how he had found him out. All this much surprised J. P., and he told the General he thought he mistook him for some other person. But the General asked him if he did not remember his being quartered at his house during the American war, adding, "If you do not, sir, I do; also the great kindness I received from you and your family. I have every reason to be grateful to you; and now

you are in England, if there is any thing in which I can contribute to your happiness, it will afford me the greatest pleasure." J. P. then recognized his friend, and related to him the subject of his errand, which appeared remarkable to both of them. He told him that if it would be any gratification to him to have a meeting with his regiment, it should be held in any way he should appoint, either on the parade or in the meeting-house; and he added, "both officers and men shall attend, and I shall attend also." As the meeting-house was not sufficiently large, it was concluded to hold the meeting on the parade; and it may be considered the most extraordinary circumstance relative to this meeting, that the whole service, which was truly satisfactory, fell on Thomas Ross, John Pemberton being silent.

In the early part of the year 1790 I went into Sussex, and attended the Quarterly Meeting for that county; as also that for Norfolk, where although I was silent I was not without exercise; and a minister whom I did not know, told me she had good unity with me, that though I had said nothing among them, she was persuaded I was under much travail of spirit, and that she believed I was much in my place in coming to that meeting. The pressure of my exercise produced a severe fever, so that I hastened home under great dejection of mind: I was however, favoured to recover in a few weeks. In the autumn of the same year I went to the Quarterly Meeting for Buckinghamshire, and staid a few days at Wycombe. At this time I apprehended I was remarkably favoured with the ownings of the Divine Master; and one night when I went to bed, the overflowings of heavenly goodness seemed greater than I had ever before experienced. I became so

enfeebled and wearied, that I thought my natural life would be taken away, as I seemed unable to bear a continuance of so great a degree of heavenly enjoyment; and I prayed earnestly that it might be taken from me, and a portion more suited to my weak state might be given me instead: indeed I believed great things did not become me, and that I was unworthy of so much Divine favour. But the next evening I became so discouraged that all seemed distress and misery; and I never before knew a time of so much darkness and wretchedness. I was wearied with the weight of exercise on my mind, and at length fell asleep; but very soon felt as though the adversary fought with me, overcame me, and pressed me down to the earth. In this extremity I called out loudly and then awoke, but it was only to feel the same distressing sensations and apprehensions; and when I again fell asleep I still had to encounter them. I got up very early in the morning in much agony of spirit, intending for London, whither George Dillwyn bore me company. I set off under the painful apprehension that I had gone before my Guide, and that this was the cause of my present trouble. I ventured to open my mind to G. D., and asked him kindly to point out to me where I had missed it at Wycombe; but to my surprise he told me he had felt much unity and love towards me, and that nothing uncomfortable had appeared to him; and in truly affectionate and fatherly freedom, counselled me against the stratagems of an unwearied enemy.

Notwithstanding the kind counsel of G. D., I could not get above the deep plunge I had at Wycombe. Indeed many were my trials inward and outward: the enemy pursued me on every side. So great were my conflicts that for many months together, I ap-

peared as in a wilderness of thorns and briers, where my spiritual ear was almost constantly assailed as with noises and cries of devouring beasts of prey. My path was as on a sea of glass mingled with fire: at every step I appeared to slide, and to be in danger of falling into the horrible pit. O! the dreadful season of dismay which I endured, in order that I might know my own superlative weakness, and that through my dear Redeemer only I could be saved. In the midst of my troubles I was cared for many ways: kind friends were watching over me for good. Some of their letters conveyed deep instruction in the needful time: I transcribe extracts from two of them as follows:—

"*Needham, Sixth Month* 28*th*, 1790,

"I have often thought of thee since I was in thy company in London, feeling great nearness towards thee, and much wishing thy growth and preservation; believing if thou keep thy place thou wilt have acceptable service for thy God. Thou must expect trying dispensations; they are the lot and portion of the true-born children. Trials bring us into a state of true feeling one for another; deepening our judgment, so as to enable us to make a right distinction between thing and thing. It is my situation frequently to be much sunk, so afraid at times that I shall not hold out to the end, &c., &c.

"Thy affectionate friend,

"W. C."

"*Philadelphia, Eighth Month*, 1790.

"Beloved Friend,

"On First day last in the evening, I reached my habitation from a journey into Virginia, when I met thy affectionate letter of 22nd of Second Month,

and 9th of Fourth Month. The forepart was much descriptive of my own situation for a long course of time; and at times I did not expect ever to experience favour to be renewed. I am through mercy somewhat relieved from the weight of distress I had endured many months, and labouring to stand single and resigned. It is acceptable to find light and favour is renewed to thee; and perhaps thou art now enabled to see that the trying dispensations which attended thee were for the great work of sanctification, and that thou mightst speak from living, feeling experience of what the Lord hath done for thy soul. Thou knowest the Lord's people formerly had many trials, conflicts and engagements, before the old inhabitants were removed; and yet some were suffered to remain, to prove their faith and patience; and it requires great watchfulness, circumspection and humility, with daily dependence, to keep inward quiet and peace. But the Lamb and his followers will have the victory. I hear a good account of thee, and wish thy steady attention and faithfulness to the gift. Thou must expect while here to meet with conflicts, provings of faith and patience; we are given to expect it. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' but 'in me peace.' Mayst thou be strengthened to abide in his love, so wilt thou experience the joy of the Lord to be thy strength. And let it be thy care, whatever thou mayst meet with which may be hard to the natural part, to sink down into patience, with a hope that all things shall work together for good. I did hope and am rejoiced to find thy beloved wife comes forward, and trust she will become a helpmeet to thee, and that you will become one another's joy in the Lord. I had sympathy with her when present, as I thought I saw and felt there was a strong con-

flict between the house of Saul and the house of David, and I am glad to find the latter waxeth stronger and stronger. My dear love to her and your lovely children; and revive in her remembrance that the righteous shall hold on their way. May she be strengthened to become victorious. I am glad to find my countryman, Jacob Duché, was so sustained under the great trial he experienced. The value of religion is best known under great trials; there is something to recur to, that stays and steadies the mind. My love to him and wife. I wish him to see through all mixtures, and to become truly simple and open to the instruction of the still small voice. This will settle his mind and gain him more true wisdom and instruction than volumes of books, and dipping into mysterious writings, that may and does tend more to perplex than edify. It will be acceptable to hear from thee, &c.

"Thy loving friend,

"JOHN PEMBERTON."

When John Pemberton was in England, I showed him the way to Jacob Duché's house. He was a minister of the church of England, and a very pious man; but I apprehend he had somewhat confused himself by reading the writings of Swedenborg, Bœhmen, and other mysterious writers; and when we called on him I believe his mind was in a great deal of perplexity. We had some serious conversation with him, and left him in an agreeable state of mind. In a few months afterward he called on me, and seemed to wish for a continuance of acquaintance. After a time he gave up to what he believed a religious duty, by relinquishing his church preferments, which were valuable, and withdrew into privacy. The rea-

son he gave me for taking this step was, that he did not believe it was right to receive money for preaching, but considered that the Gospel should be dispensed freely, and uncontaminated with the love of gain. At first he had no objection to preach a funeral or charity sermon. He had a wife, son, and two daughters, all religiously inclined. The son was an artist, and had travelled a great deal on the continent of Europe, in order to improve himself in the art of painting, in which he excelled. He had studied under Benjamin West. He undertook to paint the history of our Saviour, and finished some of his pieces in a superior style. He used frequently to converse with me on the subject of painting, as regarded in a religious point of view. On this, I freely gave him my opinion, viz., that I would not take upon me to say that painting or drawing was sinful in itself; but I thought it might, if indulged in, become a passion, and really be the "sin that easily besets;" that when we are convinced in our minds that this is the case, [as regards any pursuit,] and we so far indulge in it as that it has the pre-eminence in our thoughts, it then partakes of the nature of idolatry, against which we should be ever on our guard. I had a great affection for this young man, and I believe it was reciprocal. Though he was athletic, and well grown as to outward appearance, yet he had symptoms of pulmonary disease, that led me to fear he was not long lived. A blood-vessel had broken internally; and I observed whenever he was earnest in pursuing his favourite object, painting, that the vessel discharged blood for several days together; and if he kept quiet, the bleeding stopped and his health appeared restored. I urged his giving up the employment, but he excused himself from so doing,

by saying that his necessities now obliged him to pursue it. He however got worse and took to his bed, and was often in a heavenly frame of mind. On my speaking to him respecting the awfulness of his situation, he remarked to his father that he had, during his illness, recollected what I had said to him on the subject of painting, and that now he had an indubitable evidence that I was right in the observations I had made, and if it would please the Lord to restore him, he never would renew that employment again, believing it was an employment that was sinful to *him*. I was much with him during his illness: towards the close of it, one or other of his friends sat up with him at night. One night I went to the house intending to sit up with him. When I knocked at the door, his father opened it, and on my asking him how his son did, with a sweet smile he answered, "He is well, he is happy, and I am happy. He died about half an hour since, and departed most gloriously. We were all around him when he said, 'I see the holy angels waiting for me, to convey my spirit into the bosom of my Saviour. Don't you see them? there they are all round the bed.' In this situation he died; triumphantly singing the praises of Him whom his soul was anxiously waiting to behold." It was this occurrence that John Pemberton referred to in his letter.

I may here mention a circumstance respecting Jacob Duché, that at the time appeared interesting. He called on me one day early in the week, to consult me as he said on a subject of some importance; and proceeded to inform me that the Bishop of London had ordered him to preach in St. Paul's Church on the next Sunday, and that having given up his preferments he felt a difficulty about it.—I told him

it was a matter that it would be improper for me to interfere about; he certainly should be the best judge of his own feelings: I added, I thought he had got so far on his religious journey as to call no man master; at the same time I wished him to pursue that which would be most easy to his own mind.—He told me that in looking at it in the best manner he was able, and seeking best instruction, he thought he should be most satisfied to go.—I told him I did not feel at all uneasy about it, and I earnestly wished him well through the business.—In the course of the conversation, he said in rather a peevish way, that he knew I apprehended it was not the best way to write a sermon beforehand; but he had considered the subject, and he thought if he sat down on the Saturday and depended on Divine assistance for its composition, it must be equally acceptable as though he had waited till the Sunday to receive instruction in the pulpit in order to deliver an extempore discourse.—I replied that in the days of our ignorance and weakness, these things might be winked at; but when the dispensation came, in which we had an unshaken belief that we must live by faith, it was then I apprehended very different; but I did not wish to dictate to him; my solicitude for him was, that he might be directed right.—We then parted. The beginning of the next week he called on me again, when he appeared as though a great load had been taken from him,—so innocently cheerful that I could not but remark it to him. He told me it really was the case, that he felt his mind covered with love and peace on account of having faithfully fulfilled his commision at St. Paul's; that his mind had been greatly exercised previous to the day he went; and when he got there one clergyman read the prayers, another read the commu-

nion service, and while the Psalms were singing he got into the pulpit and laid his sermon on the cushion. During this time he felt great agitation of mind, though he knew not the reason. Previous to his preaching, he knelt down as is usual, and fervently prayed for Divine assistance, and that what he should have to deliver might be effectual to the hearts of his hearers, &c. He believed he prayed from his heart; but O the exercise he was under when he opened his sermon! He felt an injunction as clear as if he had been verbally told it, that he must not preach that sermon. What was he to do? There was not a moment to lose; the congregation were all in expectation and looking at him. A part of the epistle for the day, as in an instant, came into his mind, from which he took his text; and he proceeded in the faith that the Lord would help him, and he was not deceived. Matter seemed to flow in so extraordinary a manner, that he was humbled as in the dust. Feeling deeply the subject he was upon, the tears flowed down his cheeks, as well as down the cheeks of his audience. There was no want of words, no halting, the only difficulty now was to know when he should come to a period, so much fresh matter seemed to press upon him. He however stopped in good time, under the covering of Divine favour. When he came out of the pulpit he was surrounded by the congregation, who expressed their grateful thanks for the blessing they had received through his sermon. "And thankful was I," said he, "when I got home; nor did I omit to return thanks where it was due, for the condescending favour I had received: but" he added, "it was you that brought me into the difficulty, although I have reason to bless God for the termination of it."

Very soon after I was received as a member of the Society of Friends, and had the privilege of sitting in their meetings for discipline, I thought I discerned the great advantage of private labour; of endeavouring with all privacy, if possible, to restore any individual that may have been overtaken with a fault; thus watching over one another for good in true love. I had opportunities very early of observing the benefit that resulted from such labour; and although sometimes it has been difficult at first to make a due impression, yet in most instances, when Divine aid was sought, the humble endeavour has been crowned with success. An instance in point occurred about this time:—A young man who had from early youth shewn very many bad dispositions, and great depravity of mind, had, at times, engaged a good deal of my attention. He had an amiable mother to whom he behaved very unkindly. I frequently remonstrated with him on his unbecoming conduct, but without any seeming good effect. He indulged in loose company, in reading improper books, in attending the theatre and other dissipations; and gave liberty to his passions till he became hardened, and seemed to have lost every trace of anything like tenderness of disposition. Whilst in his career of folly, his father, who had been very tender over him, died; and his mother had been seized with a paralytic affection, so that her faculties and all her powers were much impaired. After the funeral, a Friend and myself called on this young man, and had a serious opportunity with him, wherein his state was spoken to in a remarkable manner. He was urged particularly to look at his awful situation, and told if he possessed any feeling at that moment, he could not but

be sensible that the hand of Omnipotence was upon him, in order to shew him that all power belongs to Him, and that it is in vain for us to struggle against it. It was also added, that although he might apprehend he could not be under a more heavy or trying dispensation than the present, yet he must not be surprised if a greater trial was at hand, in order that he might be instructed more deeply than he ever yet had been, in the necessity of obedience to the Divine command. He was much offended at this plain dealing, and he mentioned as much to a Friend; withal adding, that he had a great mind to have left the room, for he was sure no greater trial could befall him than the present. In less than two weeks from this time, to my surprise, he sent to me to let me know he was dangerously ill, and to request that I would call upon him as soon as I could. As soon as I saw him, he made an humble apology for sending for me, and said he had so far come to his senses as to see that I had, for a length of time, been his true friend, and one in whom he could confide; though he had foolishly resisted every attempt I had made to persuade him to more consistent conduct. I told him he never had offended me; for all that I had ever done [in that respect,] had been with a view towards his real happiness; that I was rejoiced to find him in such an agreeable disposition; and that he might depend on a continuation of my friendly regard to him. On inquiry as to the state of his health, I found he had a violent fever; and from the irritability of his nervous system, there was great reason to suspect that in a few hours he would become delirious, in which case it would be very uncertain how the complaint would terminate. I therefore recommended that a physician should be

sent for immediately ; and that he should settle his affairs and make his will without delay, and in as concise a way as he could. All this was done previous to the coming on of the delirium. In the mean time he earnestly requested I would not leave him more than I could help ; I therefore staid with him as much as I could in the day time, and took my turn to sit up with him at night. I lost no opportunity of endeavouring to turn his attention to the important matter of his soul's salvation through Jesus Christ. The delirium did not last so long as was at first expected; but the fever continued several weeks. I knew he had imbibed deistical notions, which I had feared would make it difficult by the mere force of reason to convince him of his errors : my dependence was on our divine Helper, who was pleased to bless the work. One day I ventured to ask him if he had any objection to see a minister who was then in London ; to which he objected, on account, (as he said) of his always preaching from Solomon's Song. However a few days afterward, when we were discoursing on the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, he broke out into a sort of ecstacy as follows : "Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock, and where thou restest at noon-day; for why should I be as one that turneth aside." This he spoke with great earnestness, and burst into a flood of tears, more especially after repeating the latter part of the sentence. During some part of his illness he was all agitation and fears, lest he should die and be utterly miserable. One night in particular, he said he wished to go to sleep, but could not, unless I would let him take hold of my hand : he awoke several times in great horror, crying out, O save me ! save me ! saying, when he

was a little awake, "O do not leave me Frederick! I thought I was just dropping into the flames that appeared underneath me; don't let go my hand." After a time he became more composed, and he wished me to read some of Cowper's Hymns. I selected one, entitled *The Contrite Heart*, and having read it, he was much pleased with it; said he should like to learn it, and if I would read it again, he would repeat after me. The first stanza seemed to affect him much.

> "The Lord will happiness divine
> On contrite hearts bestow;
> Then tell me gracious God, is mine
> A contrite heart or no."

When he came to the two last lines, he burst into tears; and with a degree of earnestness he cried out,

> "Then tell me gracious God, is mine
> A contrite heart or no."

and this he did every time he repeated these lines. It was a great relief to my mind to observe the gradual unfoldings of Divine goodness to this young man: it was by the power of Divine grace alone, that he was made to see the excellency of the Christian dispensation. One day, while conversing on the sufferings and death of Christ, he seemed to enter into the nature of his suffering on the cross, and spoke of it with that sensible feeling, which none but those who are favoured to experience its efficacy could manifest. "O," said he, "the goodness of God! to institute such a plan of redemption for poor, lost man. And did he suffer all these things for me? Ah! what must have been the sufferings of the holy Jesus, in bearing the sins of the whole world, when I am so unable to bear my own! Did he die for me, a wretched sinner? O, the goodness of God!" These, and many more ex-

pressions, from true religious feeling he uttered, the tears trickling down his cheeks. He was brought to such a state as to believe, if he was favoured to die then, he should be received into glory, and seemed devoutly to wait for his change. But his disorder abated; and when he perceived he was likely to recover, he felt keen distress; and said that his multiplied weaknesses, and his natural inclination to evil, which none knew but himself, caused in him such a dread of again entering into the world, as he could not express. It pleased Him who orders all things well, gradually to restore him to health.

The Almighty, in his dispensations towards the children of men, acts as seems good to himself; and it not unfrequently happens that the ways of his Providence are involved in deep mystery, which in his own time he is often pleased to reveal. Conceived in sin, man dwells in the midst of darkness, which can only be dispelled by the influence of Divine grace. With some, as with the Apostle Paul, the mind is at once so divinely illuminated, that they pass forthwith out of the gloomy darkness of death into the marvellous light of the kingdom of God; with others the change is less rapid, the shades of ignorance gradually dispersing and vanishing, as the night yields to the approach of the morning light. In the following narrative, we discover the power and excellence of Divine goodness, and a great display of heavenly condescension.—

About the year 1797, I became acquainted with Count N——, a native of Ireland. In early youth he was sent by his parents into Germany, and was educated at one of the Universities there. He was brought up in the Roman Catholic persuasion; the inconsistency of which, he told me, he very early

saw. The bigotry, superstition, and wickedness of the priests were such as to give him a disgust to religion; believing, he said, that the foundation of it was dissimulation and priestcraft. When he left the University, he was introduced to the Emperor, Joseph the Second, to whom he afterwards became Lord of the Bedchamber, and was soon made an officer of rank in the German army, a part of which he commanded in a war against the Turks. The Emperor made him a Count, in addition to his hereditary titles of Marquis and Viscount of Valedesto, in Spain; and he was also a grandee of the first rank in that kingdom. He was besides related to some of the first nobility in England and Ireland.

At the commencement of our acquaintance, he expressed a wish to know something of the principles of Friends. I lent him *Barclay's Apology*, which he read: when he returned it, he told me it was the best written book on divinity he had ever seen; and if it were possible to act according to the sentiments contained in it, no man could act wrong: but he added, "I have something to say to you in private, which I hardly dare say to any man. Unfortunately for me, I do not believe in any system of religion; I do not even believe in the existence of God. You may be assured it is a subject which has given me a great deal of thought; and when I came into this Protestant country, I had hoped I should have discovered the essence of truth, and that the Protestant clergy would have given the lie to the impressions I had imbibed from my early prejudices, on account of the dissolute and abandoned lives of the Romish clergy. But alas! I perceive there is the same system of deception carried on in England as in Germany. The clergy have only one thing in view, and that is

the accumulation of wealth; and, where it can be done, to endeavour after splendour and aggrandizement. As to their flocks, it is a matter of no consequence whether they are ignorant or wise; it appears no part of their study to aim at their religious improvement; so that I find myself just where I was. I observe that all mankind are alike; they pretend to religion, and that is all; they talk of it and there they leave it. As a confirmation of what I say, I may inform you, that on my first coming into these parts, I paid a visit to my relations in Ireland, who showed me great hospitality and kindness; and, as is usual in that country, there were large convivial parties, where neither the manners nor the conversation would bear much reflection, even in an infidel (as I suppose I should be called.)

"It happened that the conversation one evening took a religious turn, in the course of which I inadvertently leaned towards scepticism. On this, one of the company hastily said, 'Surely sir, you don't doubt the existence of a Supreme Being;'—to which I replied, 'What are your sentiments on that subject?'—'Why sir, my sentiments are these: I look upon the Almighty as of infinite purity, as the object both of love and fear; that I am in his immediate presence; it is through him I live and move and have my being. I consider that I am amenable to him for every action of my life; that if I do evil voluntarily, I run the hazard of his eternal displeasure, but if I act according to his will, I shall be eternally happy.'—'Is this, sir, really and truly your belief?'—'Yes sir, it undoubtedly is; and it is also the belief of every well-regulated Christian.'—'Then sir, how comes it to pass that your actions correspond so little with your professions? Is it possible that

such a hearsay evidence as this would convince me, were I an atheist, of the truth of God's existence? Has any part of your conduct, since we have been so often together, manifested either love, or fear, or reverence for this object of your pretended regard? I wish not to give you offence, but see whether there is anything like consistency between your declarations and the conduct I am led to fear you are in the habitual practice of.' The gentleman seemed confused and thoughtful; and I immediately turned the discourse to another subject."

I was much struck with this conversation, and considerably more so, when he told me that he had left Germany on account of his objection to serve any longer in the army. The thought of taking away the life of a fellow-man, had become distressing and perplexing to him; so much so, that he at length resolved he would in no way be accessory to it. He added, that since he had been in England, a relation of his, the Marquis of B——, had kindly offered to raise a regiment of horse in Ireland, and get him the command of it, which he had politely refused, on the ground mentioned above; and that this had been the occasion of the Marquis's displeasure, and the loss of his friendship. From what I could gather, the Marquis had shown him much attention, and had conferred on him many favours; but the natural impetuosity of Count N——'s temper, and the hauteur he had acquired in the German court, had rendered him impatient of contradiction; so that I had reason to suspect the Marquis had taken umbrage at some other part of his conduct, in addition to his refusal of the generous offer of preferment in Ireland.

I felt much interested for this person, and carefully concealed from every one what his sentiments were.

I apprehended that where there appeared so great sincerity, the Almighty would reveal himself in his own time. He seemed much gratified by attending our religious meetings, and I have many times seen him much affected and in tears. He used frequently, in a modest way, to argue with me the point of his disbelief; but never, I believe to much purpose on his part. I lent him several books wherein the existence of God was treated of; but all seemed unavailing. He made notes on a Bible I lent him, almost through the whole book, in opposition to its precepts and doctrines. Towards the close of his infidelity, he requested I would lend him Newton's *Principia;* which I refused, in the belief, as I told him, that he had wandered far in the dark, by seeking for that without, which was only to be discovered in the secret of the heart; I therefore advised him to keep his mind quiet, adding, that I believed the Almighty would one day make himself known to him, but he must not be surprised if He should do it in such a way, as would, in his view, be contemptible.

A few weeks after this, two female Friends, Ann Christy and Deborah Moline, had a concern to visit the families of Westminster meeting, as also those who were attenders but not in membership. As Count N—— had for a considerable time been an almost constant attender, his name was set down with two others; and I requested the Friends to let me sit with them. Very soon after we were seated, Divine Goodness was pleased to overshadow this little assembly. The poor object of this narrative, in a few minutes burst into tears, and continued in this humbled state for nearly twenty minutes before a word was uttered; when one of the females, unlearned as to human attainments, but who had waited for Christ to

be her Instructor, expressed herself to this effect: That she had felt an extraordinary solemnity at our first sitting down, which had continued to the present time; so much so, that she had feared to speak, although she also feared to keep silence, more especially as the subject which had come before her, was of a truly awful and extraordinary nature. "Surely," she said, "there is no person present, who has any doubts respecting the existence of a Supreme Being. If there is, I would have such to look into their own hearts, and observe the secret operation of something they cannot but feel. When they have committed an evil action, how does it torment the poor mind, and render it for a time continually uneasy! On the other hand, when they have acted well and have avoided the temptation to evil, what a sweet glow of approbation has covered the mind! From whence proceed this uneasiness and this approbation? Man cannot communicate such sensations to himself. Be assured they come from God; nay, it is God himself who thus speaks in the inmost of the soul." The Friend said but little more—to the person addressed it was a volume—it was as though the windows of heaven were opened—to myself it was an opportunity never to be forgotten.

About two days afterwards, my friend called on me in the evening, and requested to have some conversation with me, to which I readily agreed. Without much preface, he told me, that he knew not how he could be sufficiently grateful for the patience I had shown him, or for the kind concern I had manifested for his welfare; but he added, "I believe it will give you inconceivable pleasure, to be informed that I have not a doubt remaining. I am full of thankfulness to that Almighty Being, who in mercy has made himself

known to this poor benighted heart of mine, in some degree through the instrumentality of that dear woman; though I may acknowledge to you, that before a word was spoken, the business was completed. I had taken great pains, as you know, to invalidate the Scripture testimonies; but at that solemn and heavenly opportunity, all the arguments I had made use of for this purpose, reverted back, and I became ashamed and confounded. I felt as it were, all at once, the certain evidence of a merciful and kind God, which so overcame me, that I could only show my love and gratitude by my tears; so that for a while, I appeared as in heaven, that is, in a state of mind far beyond what any earthly object could bestow. The dear woman was doubtless sensible of my situation, she having confirmed to me the evidence I felt in my own soul. I thought this evening, that though I had been thus favoured, it would be difficult to prove the divinity of Christ, a doctrine which I had conceived to be altogether absurd; but on coming up your steps, and waiting to speak to you, the whole mystery was unfolded, and I now have no doubts on that subject." He explained to me his views on this point, in a remarkable manner; as also on the creation of man, his fall, and other serious subjects, so as to leave me no doubt that he had been favoured with a Divine illumination. His very nature seemed altered, and his countenance changed. From the haughtiness so often observable in those who possess outward rank in society, he was now become mild and passive like a little child.

I remember, soon after this occurrence, his calling on me one morning, when, during the previous night, there had been a dreadful storm, attended with violent thunder and lightning. He related his feelings at

the time, which were very striking. He said that previous to this storm he had never known what the fear of death was; for he had supposed death to be mere annihilation, when both soul and body were destroyed at the same moment. But now the case was different; he saw his awful situation, that in an instant he might be in the presence of that Being whom he had contemned during his whole life. His sins were ranged in order before him, and he felt all the horrors of self-condemnation and fear. In this situation he was led to pray fervently for forgiveness for the past, and preservation for the future. It was a new scene in the period of his existence, the effect of which words could not express. After his mind had been thus graciously visited and enlightened, his naturally imperious temper would frequently show itself in sudden fits of passion, for which he often expressed his sorrow. Perhaps this natural temper was permitted to assail him in order to convince him of the necessity of watchfulness, and of guarding against dependence on his own strength. It is but justice to him to say, that he never showed intemperate behaviour towards myself, but always treated me with the greatest respect.

He had a sister, a Roman Catholic, married to a nobleman at Strasburg, with whom he intended to reside. The necessity for this he very often lamented, because he would in that case be surrounded by the Romish clergy, whom he despised as gross hypocrites, but towards whom he must behave with civility, which would be a great task to him. Previously to his leaving England, he requested to be supplied with some of the writings of Friends, feeling more satisfaction in the perusal of them than any other books. He attended Friends' meetings regularly till his departure.

[This last narrative concludes the *Memoirs of Frederick Smith*, as written by himself. About the year 1806, he removed from the Haymarket, Westminster, to Croydon, where he continued to reside till his decease.—The following brief sketch of his character, and account of his last illness and death, are extracted from the *Testimony of Kingston Monthly Meeting*.]

He did not travel much in the work of the ministry, although it appears, that from the year 1790 to 1818, with the approbation of his friends, he performed journeys in that service through divers counties in England, and was often engaged in visits to the families of Friends: and having deeply partaken of the sufferings, as well as of the consolations of the Gospel, he was, in his ministry and otherwise, a true sympathizer with the afflicted and mournful, pouring in the wine and oil for their refreshment and comfort. A large portion of his time was occupied in endeavouring to alleviate the distresses of his fellow-creatures; he was actively engaged in promoting many public institutions for benevolent purposes; he also devoted himself for the good of others in a more private capacity, and was frequently engaged as a peace-maker in healing of differences. He was not only exemplary himself, but also zealous in encouraging others in the diligent attendance of our religious meetings. His conversation was innocently cheerful, and his affectionate disposition procured for him great influence over the youth: [the two Addresses which follow these Memoirs, shew how deeply he was concerned that this interesting class of his fellow-professors, should be found walking in the truth.]

He had, for a considerable time been liable to an affection of the heart, but did not appear to grow materially worse until the 20th of Fourth Month,

1823; when, after a restless night, in the morning he was seized with a violent paroxysm; this continued about three-quarters of an hour, and was succeeded by violent retchings, at intervals, until noon the next day: from that time he appeared quite easy. On coming to himself, he said, "I believe my time will not now be long; God bless you, God Almighty bless you. I only desire resignation, and I feel resignation, and am willing to suffer whatever the Lord may think fit to inflict upon me." He then prayed fervently and with great energy, "Let not thy hand spare nor thine eye pity, till thou hast made me what thou wouldst have me to be;" and said, "this has been my constant prayer for several weeks, I may say months past: my sufferings have been very great for some hours, but I can bear all, everything, ah! yes, no matter what, if it be His will. Almighty God bless you all, and all my dear friends. O Lord God, thy hand is upon me! enable me to bear all to the end. I feel resigned either to stay or go; the Lord's will be done. The Lord is good, he is very good; he has given me a kind and affectionate wife, dutiful and affectionate children;" and he enumerated other blessings that excited his feelings of gratitude. After this, his breathing being very oppressive, it was with difficulty he could express himself; but his uniform reply to inquiries was, "I feel very comfortable." He lay in a peaceful, quiet state, and was sensible to the last. About two minutes before his departure, he asked one of his children to take his hand, and without sigh or groan expired.

He died the 22nd of Fourth Month, 1823, at Croydon, and was interred there on the 27th of the same, previous to a very large and solemn meeting; aged sixty-six, a minister about thirty-four years.

A LETTER

TO

THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

By FREDERICK SMITH.

Dear Young Friends,

I regard as some of the most pleasing circumstances of my life, the opportunities I have had of contemplating the innocence and simplicity of such youth, as have had their minds regulated and governed by divine love, and feared to do evil lest they should offend that Almighty Being, under whose precious influence they have desired to be preserved. Under this consideration, I feel myself engaged to offer to you a few hints, which I trust will not be unprofitable.

In the first place, I wish to call your attention to a subject, with which there is little doubt but most of you are acquainted; namely, the proneness there is in your nature to do evil—to yield to the secret temptations that frequently oppress you, and urge you, perhaps to commit sins, which you would be ashamed to acknowledge, even to your most intimate companions. This, I apprehend, few of you will deny. At the same time, some of you must also acknowledge, that, notwithstanding you have been thus tried, as you have considered the dreadful con-

sequences of yielding to these temptations, you have been sometimes enabled to resist them ; and this has afforded you solid peace and satisfaction.

Thus then, it is evident that you feel within yourselves a principle of good and a principle of evil; that when evil presents itself in any form, you know it to be such ; and when thus known, a fear and dread usually accompanies it. This is the effect of the grace of God, or the divine light of Christ within you. And as this grace or light is attended to, it will always be you preserver ; according to the declaration of the Apostle Paul, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men ; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."—Tit. ii. 11. Here then, we see the goodness of the Almighty : when any sin, which would have been gratifying and pleasing to you has presented itself, it has been pointed out to you to be sinful ; you have believed it to be so, and thus have been warned against falling into the snare of the enemy. Your own experience also has already taught you, that though in many instances you have been preserved, it has not been without great difficulty ; and that, had you given way to your own inclinations, you would have fallen into many grievous sins. But it was your Lord and Saviour who so tenderly watched over you ; and it is through his loving-kindness that you have been so often preserved. Temptation you will perceive is gradual : at first evil thoughts present themselves, then evil desires ; and if the divine Instructor be not attended to, these desires produce evil actions ; which, being offensive in the divine sight, occasion those painful sensations which the commission of sin leaves on the

mind. And it is a great favour that sin does leave a sting behind, because this leads to repentance. For though the Lord has all power in his hands, and sees all the evil of your hearts, knows every thought, and is acquainted with every sin you commit, and could punish those who act contrary to his holy will made known in the heart; yet his love is such, that if those who have transgressed, truly and sincerely repent, and use all their endeavours to avoid sinning any more, he will forgive them, and will, for his Son's sake, again take them into his favour. How good then ought you to be, when you see he deals so kindly and tenderly with you! What an abundant favour it is, that he offers you, and will give you, the ability to do his will, and thereby to please him! The more, therefore, you attend to his instructions to avoid the evil and to choose the good, the more you will experience true happiness and peace. Looking at these things, I have much desired that you, my dear young friends, would ponder them in your hearts, and so conduct yourselves as to draw down his favour and love; for as that is the greatest blessing you can enjoy, so I am persuaded you cannot do too much to obtain it.

I shall now further endeavour to shew you, how you may, by divine assistance, overcome those evil propensities of which I have been speaking. It is very certain, that there is a secret principle in our minds, as I have before said, which points out to us what is evil, and teaches us to avoid it. It is to this Teacher, I would recommend you to be particularly attentive; because, if it be slighted, though it may for a time discover to you what is wrong, yet by continual disobedience, you will find, that, instead of your growing in grace and in goodness, you will

slide into hardness of heart, and sooner or later bring yourselves into great misery and distress. For what greater distress can we be brought into, than to see and feel, that, having acted contrary to the divine will, we have displeased our Heavenly Father; and that our continued evil conduct has left us but little hope of gaining his favour any more. Use all your endeavours then, to avoid getting into this deplorable state. Let the pious resolution of David be yours: "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not:"—Psal. xxxix. 1, so you will find, that peace and comfort will abound in your hearts.

The great means of gaining strength to do the will of your Father who is in heaven, is to look to him for help; for he alone can give efficacy to your exertions. Always live as though you were sensible you were immediately in his sight; and strive to pray to him to preserve you; and consider him as a tender parent who loves his children, who is ever ready to do them good, and whose will is that they should be sensible of his presence, power, and love. These dispositions towards your Almighty Protector, will increase your desire to follow him wherever he may choose to lead you; they will so clothe your minds with divine love, that you will be willing to forsake every thing which may be likely to obstruct the enjoyment of it, or in other words, to obstruct your union with God. You will, on this account, endeavour to avoid thinking of evil, either as to the giving way to temptation, or indulging any disposition to lying, deceit, envy or ill nature towards any one; you will also know that wanton cruelty, even to the most helpless animals, (which are creatures of God's making as well as yourselves,) passion, resentment, hatred and revenge, are dispositions which proceed

from your own evil or fallen nature, and will tend to separate you from the Giver of all good. It is a certain truth that "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." —1 John iv. 8. The youth whose mind is in this state, and who is desirous of contemplating the goodness of the Almighty, will feel a sense of gratitude, that he has a capacity given him of attaining to that most exalted of all enjoyments, a union with his Maker. It is therefore our own fault, seeing we are mercifully favoured with the means, if we do not avail ourselves of so great a blessing.

The evil to which I have before adverted, is declared in Scripture to have arisen from the fall of man. The first man, Adam, was created in a state of innocence, free from sin. His nature was not corrupt, until, by disobeying the divine command, he transgressed. In consequence of this he was driven out of Paradise, a place of the highest earthly happiness; and instead of continuing to enjoy this state of perfection and innocence, he became subject to the evil propensities we also feel; though none are condemnable till they have yielded to temptation. But although Adam by thus transgressing, introduced sin and death into the world, and rendered himself an object of divine displeasure; yet the Almighty had compassion on mankind, and appointed a way for their salvation, through his Son Jesus Christ; who in due time took upon him our nature, and suffered and died for the sins of the world, as is at large set forth in many parts of the Scriptures.

The Sacred Writings further shew us, that if we are willing to be under the guidance of Jesus Christ, we shall be restored to that blessed state from which

Adam fell; as says the apostle Paul, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."—1 Cor. xv. 22. Also "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam (by which Christ is meant) was made a quickening (or life-giving) spirit."—ver. 45.

I shall now quote a few other Scripture testimonies, from the Old and New Testament, concerning Jesus Christ; which will shew you the connexion there is in the Sacred Writings, and also the advantage there is in comparing them together.

Isaiah, speaking prophetically of the coming of Christ, says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. ix. 6. The same prophet, speaking of his death and sufferings, and of the blessings that would arise from them to mankind, as a sacrifice for sinners and as a pattern of patience and humility, says, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Read the whole of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

The following show the completion of the foregoing declarations; and that salvation and redemption come through Jesus Christ.

"For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke ii. 11.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16.

"I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—John x. 9.

"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts iv. 12.

"Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—Heb. vii. 25.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." —1 Peter ii. 24.

These few passages of Scripture will shew you the foundation of the Christian religion; and if you are willing to attend to the divine law in your hearts, your own experience will confirm to you the want and necessity of a Saviour, that you may be redeemed from your sins.

And now, my dear young friends, I shall conclude this letter with a few observations respecting your conduct.

In the first place, consider that the end and intention of your creation is, that you should glorify God, which cannot be done, but by doing his will. Endea-

your then to love him above all things; and that this may be the case, consider your religious duties as of the highest importance.

Do not neglect your meetings for worship; always attend them with cheerfulness; and when there, strive in silence to feel after the divine presence to comfort and instruct you. Never encourage a thought that the time appointed for this or any other religious service is misapplied; for God's all-seeing eye can discover every thought as well as action, and whether what we do is done grudgingly, or from a love to him; and according to our works so will he deal with us.

Let the first day of the week be a day of religious improvement, and not of idle dissipation. Frequently read the Holy Scriptures, particularly on that day: they are full of wisdom and instruction: in them you will find that Joseph and Samuel were examples worthy of imitation, when very young; for they loved the Lord above all things, and he preserved and blessed them in an eminent degree. If you read the Sacred Scriptures in a right disposition, they will prove a confirmation to your faith and hope, a comfort and stay to your minds. Never quote them in a light manner, or speak lightly of them, or associate with those that do. Endeavour, even every day, to read a portion of them the first thing in the morning; and afterwards, inwardly and silently retire before the Lord, and strive to seek his blessing, that you may be preserved from evil during the day. And again at night, before you go to rest, endeavour to recollect whether something may not have occurred, that has been of an evil tendency; and if such should have been the case, humble yourselves before him, and seek to be reconciled to him before you go to sleep.

Read also the writings of those of our own Society,

in order that you may cultivate an acquaintance with the history of Friends and the principles of truth, of which you are making profession. In many of them you will be much instructed, and also strengthened to hold on your way, by observing with what steadiness and fortitude they bore their testimony for the truth; and some of them even unto death.

Be careful not to deviate from that plainness and simplicity of dress and manners, in which faithful Friends have set the example; having themselves found preservation and true peace therein. A strict attention to this, will be a great means of preventing your falling into snares you may be little aware of. The want of due care in this respect has lamentably paved the way for deep distress, in many instances; and not to the individuals only, but also to their families and connexions.

Thus, my dear young friends, you will be kept in the holy love and fear of your Heavenly Father; and as you continue so to act, he will watch over you and bless you all your days; and in the end you will be received by him into heaven, there to enjoy unutterable happiness for ever.

I am your affectionate Friend,

FREDERICK SMITH.

London, 20th of Twelfth Month, 1805.

A LETTER

TO

PARENTS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE THE CARE OF YOUTH

IN THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

By FREDERICK SMITH.

Dear Friends,

The education of the children of our Society has been the subject of my most serious thoughts, and I have often and earnestly desired it might be taken up by some person whose qualifications would have enabled him to do it more justice than I suppose myself capable of rendering it; but no individual having stepped forward of late years, to bring into view this truly interesting concern, I have ventured to throw a few hints together, in order that the matter may be deeply considered by those on whom rests the care of the rising generation.

Though I had intended the principal part of what I may now communicate for the consideration of school-masters, school-mistresses, and other instructors of children, yet I feel it a duty to say something also to parents.

It is a complaint which I fear is made with much justice, that many parents are too negligent respecting the religious education and instruction of their children; too careless and inattentive in watching over them; and too little solicitous that the *seeds* of

those pernicious weeds be destroyed, which, being overlooked, spring up into pride, ambition, and irreligion. Nor are even some of those from whose situation in the Society we might have looked for more lively care and regard, always exceptions to this sorrowful complaint.

It must be obvious to those who will look impartially at the outward appearance of our Society, that it has lost much of that plainness which distinguished our ancestors; and that many of late years have shown so increasing a tendency to conformity with the world, that were as great alterations progressively to take place, I fear but few vestiges would ere long remain, of that simplicity which the truth leads into; and which has been as a way-mark to many, and the means of incalculable preservation to the dear youth of both sexes. But I am grieved to add, that I apprehend this declension is much to be attributed to the spiritual weakness and indulgence of parents. Having yielded to the youthful inclinations of their children, they have paved the way for their gradually uniting with the pleasures, fashions, and maxims of the world; which, in their natural consequence, lead to a total distaste for religious duties—a distaste to those very pursuits and employments which should yield them the purest delight. Ah! my friends, let us pause awhile, and examine within ourselves whether these things are not so; and whether our own peace and the eternal happiness of our beloved offspring, are not concerned in our immediate endeavour, to check an evil fraught with such imminent danger. Our own experience and observation must have clearly shown us the great advantage of keeping within the safe enclosure; for herein preservation from many hurtful things has

been known. Nay, may it not be said to be one means of preparation for the work of the Lord? Let this experience then animate us firmly and steadily to restrain those feelings, which tempt us to grant to our dear children, liberties that the truth will not sanction—feelings which we may be assured have only *the semblance* of true love or true affection.

I believe it will be allowed, that there never was a time when it appeared more necessary for individuals, in every part of the Society, to be diligent in endeavouring to build its waste places: and perhaps, if this work be rightly set about, it will be found, every one must begin in earnest at his own house. The evils which we feel may be continually deplored; but lamentation and exclamation will do little towards effecting this desirable end. We must put shoulder to shoulder, and individually exert those powers with which Divine Goodness would not fail to supply us.

The recollection of most who have been favoured with truly religious parents, if they look back at their early youth, will convince them of the powerful influence such had over them; more especially when they laboured to inculcate sentiments of religion and virtue. May we not then, dear friends, expect that the same effect would be produced by *our* circumspect walking before our beloved offspring, and thus labouring with them.

The minds of children are tender and susceptible; they feel the force of advice and counsel affectionately communicated by those whom they love; the good effects of it are seldom, if ever, totally eradicated; and the ground-work being thus laid by precept and confirmed by example, would, I believe, in most

instances, be blessed, sooner or later, to the anxious and pious parent.

A religious education is the richest gift a parent can bestow on a child : the want of it can never be made up by any wealth it may be in his power to leave him. The love of parents never shows itself to so great advantage, as when they appear solicitous for the religious welfare of their children ; and it is remarkable that there are scarcely any persons, even of those who are, as to themselves, careless respecting this important matter, but who are occasionally desirous that the seeds of virtue and goodness may be implanted in their children. This desire is observable when their children return from school. If religious and moral principles are not then apparent in them, blame is often attributed to the school-master ; when, did the parent look into his own breast, he would discover that neither by precept nor example, had he taken early pains to encourage those dispositions, he now perceives would have been peculiarly desirable in his child. The situation of a parent under such a circumstance, is an awful one ; and many have found it so, when it has been too late to remedy the evil.

I therefore earnestly desire, that such parents as have young children yet uncontaminated, may feel a living and constant concern to avoid the danger of their children's blood being required at their hands.

I believe that little more need here be added to *parents*, than the following excellent advices, extracted from the Epistles of the Yearly Meeting.

" We do with earnestness recommend to all such parents as have experienced the gracious dealings of the Lord with their own souls, to take all proper opportunities of instilling into the minds of their

children, just sentiments respecting the vanity and emptiness of fading and transitory enjoyments; and to direct them to seek after that solid peace and serenity of mind, which attends the sincere practice of true religion and virtue, and which only can afford any durable, solid satisfaction."—*Epistle*, 1745.

"And ye parents, be ye solicitous to discharge your important and awful duty with scrupulous attention. It is often too late to warn the youthful mind of danger, when your own negligence or indulgence hath suffered your offspring to deviate from that path of simplicity, in which you have thought yourselves bound to walk, and in which you have found peace. If you fail to suppress the early beginnings of undue liberty, how can you expect a blessing on your endeavours when further deviations at length arouse your attention? and how, having failed to rule your own houses well, can you expect duly to 'take care of the church of God,' by performing that too much neglected duty of private admonition therein? There were of old those who brought children to Christ in the days of his flesh; and now, the religious parent can breathe no warmer aspiration for them, than when he spiritually commends his tender offspring to the protection of his Lord. But see, Friends, that you encourage no propensities in them, which prevent an union with him. Restrain them, we beseech you, from associating with those whose influence and example lead away from his law; and be especially careful that you introduce not among them publications which are, either wholly or in part, repugnant to the faith as it is in Jesus. Let it be your own daily care to endeavour after closer communion with him, and to walk in meek submission to his commands: so may you gain

over the minds of the youth providentally placed under your care, that ascendancy which arises from the united effects of sound judgment, truest love, and a good example."—*Epistle*, 1800.

Now as to those who undertake the tuition of the children of others, they have a most serious trust committed to them: the real well-being of such children greatly depends on their tutors' attention to their religious improvement.

Some parents wish their children to excel in literature. To this, simply considered, there can be no objection; but an education ever so brilliant, without the more important addition of true religion, is deprived of its greatest excellence; whereas, with this blessed advantage, a man will be rendered a bright example, and may become extensively useful.

Seeing then that the education of children is of so much importance, I conceive it is highly desirable that those who undertake so weighty a trust as the education of the children of others, should themselves be "men fearing God," and should engage in it from principle.

Let them make it their first study to live so near the Fountain of truth, as to be able rightly to instruct them in their relation to their Creator, and their consequent necessary and positive duty to him; and also in the doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ. Their minds being thus imbued with religious reverence, they would be prepared to receive the further opening of counsel, on the benefit of frequent retirement in spirit, and abstraction from sensible objects; for the renewings of divine favour and strength, to withstand temptation to evil, and to qualify them to look up to the Lord, and love him as the Fountain of all their blessings.

Religion, when thus properly implanted, would, with the divine blessing, become habitual; or at least such a foundation would be laid, that, though some of the youth might be so unwise as to swerve from its wholesome and salutary dictates, they might afterwards, like the repentant prodigal, retrace their mistaken steps, might look towards their Heavenly Father's house in great self-abasement, and through divine mercy, experience restoration. On the contrary, young persons who have been neglected, and have never known any religious instruction, either from parents or tutors, seem in a most deplorable state; and will have good reason to reflect upon those whose first business ought to have been, to instil the principles of true Christianity into their minds.

O that those who engage in the education of the youth among us, were firm in all their proceedings respecting them; and would, as much as in them lies, avoid running the hazard of their school becoming contaminated, out of favour or affection to any negligent parents, by permitting loose examples, either in manners, dress, or address, inconsistent with our holy profession! If a stand in this respect were made, I am persuaded much advantage to the rising generation would result from it. Those who, from a principle of duty, endeavour to preserve this order in their establishments, will, I believe, find abundant support in the rectitude of their conduct; nor could those parents who had the real welfare of their children at heart, reasonably object to the adoption of a plan which had the principles of their profession for its foundation.

In addition to this, no books should be introduced into a school until perused by the master or mistress; but such books should be provided as tend to convey

instruction to their susceptible minds, in an agreeable and alluring manner: always avoiding those which, however otherwise instructive, have the least tendency to subvert, or even indirectly to attack the truth as it is in Christ.

But above all outward means of instilling religious knowledge, do not fail, dear Friends, to make the Sacred Volume a frequent object of your children's or your pupils' attention. You will find it an advantage to have your families daily assembled for the purpose of reading a portion of it. In doing this, care should be taken, that so much be not read at a time, as to prove tedious to young and active minds; and also that attention and a decent stillness of behaviour prevail while thus engaged. A moderate pause on leaving off, will afford time for digesting what has been read, or for indulging such sensations of reverence as may have been excited; and if you endeavour to keep your minds low, and dependent on heavenly instruction, you may sometimes be enabled profitably to explain what has occurred that may not appear obvious; or otherwise speak a word in season, and so implant some good principle in the youthful breast.

One day in the week is more especially set apart for the purposes of religion. Let that day then, without lessening their attention to religious duties at other times, be appropriated to them; and let all those engagements be excluded which do not comport with this practice.

Some part of what I have been saying, may be in degree applicable to those who have the care of youth more advanced in years, namely, servants and apprentices. I well know it is sometimes difficult to use that restraint towards young people of a lively disposition, which nevertheless is really necessary. They

are oftentimes influenced by the example of some of their own age, whose parents or others have permitted them to take undue liberties; even so much so as to abandon that becoming simplicity of manners for which we, as a Society, are remarked. But, dear Friends, be assured your firm and steady care over the youth of this class, will meet with its reward. Only reflect on the gratitude thou wouldst feel towards that friend, who considered thy child as his own, and who, by precept, example, and that restraint which arises from love alone, had done all in his power to preserve thy child from the contamination of the world.

To conclude.—What occupation in this life can be more honourable than theirs, who carefully and successfully attend to the religious improvement of youth? Those who have been thus engaged to fulfil their duty, must have a solace in their minds, far beyond any earthly advantage they may reap by their outward profession; whilst the sincerest gratitude and love, both from the parents and the children, cannot but be excited towards them.

I am your affectionate friend,

FREDERICK SMITH.

London, 13th of First Month, 1806.

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